

A CASE STUDY OF CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND  
PARISHIONER HEALING  
IN THE CHURCH

James Stanley Utley

B.S., Shaw University, 2007  
M. Div., Shaw University Divinity School, 2010

Mentors  
Sir Walter Mack, D. Min.  
Eric Gladney, D. Min.

A FINAL PROJECT SUBMITTED TO  
THE DOCTORAL STUDIES COMMITTEE  
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS  
FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

UNITED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY  
DAYTON, OHIO  
December, 2012

**United Theological Seminary  
Dayton, Ohio**

**Faculty Approval Page  
Doctor of Ministry Final Project**

**A CASE STUDY OF CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND  
PARISHIONER HEALING  
IN THE CHURCH**

by

James Stanley Utley

United Theological Seminary, 2012

Mentors

Sir Walter Mack, D. Min.

Eric Gladney, D. Min.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Approved:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Faculty Mentor:

\_\_\_\_\_

Associate Dean of Doctoral Studies



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT .....	v
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	vi
DEDICATION .....	viii
LIST OF TABLES .....	ix
LIST OF FIGURES .....	x
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS .....	xi
INTRODUCTION .....	1
CHAPTER	
1. MINISTRY FOCUS .....	4
The Context .....	8
The Synergy.....	11
2. THE STATE OF THE ART IN THIS MINISTRY PROJECT .....	15
3. THEORETICAL FOUNDATION .....	25
4. METHODOLOGY .....	85
5. FIELD EXPERIENCE .....	90
6. REFLECTIONS, SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION .....	108
APPENDIX	
A. CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT .....	111
B. AGREEMENT TO PARTICIPATE.....	113
C. BIBLE STUDY STEWARDSHIP .....	115
D. BIBLE STUDY FORGIVENESS .....	122
E. THE PARABLE OF THE UNFORGIVING SERVANT .....	125

F.	QUESTIONNAIRES ONE AND TWO.....	128
G.	THE HEALING OF NAAMAN .....	133
BIBLIOGRAPHY .....		142

**ABSTRACT**  
**A CASE STUDY OF CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND**  
**PARISHIONER HEALING**  
**IN THE CHURCH**

by

James Stanley Utley  
United Theological Seminary, 2012

Mentors

Sir Walter Mack, D. Min.

Eric Gladney, D. Min.

The problem at Malaby's Crossroads Baptist Church involved a power struggle between church leaders also between young and old members. In addition, some leaders argued against having female ministers in the pulpit. Consequently, a progressive ministry model was conducted to introduce a strategy for conflict resolution and healing. The methodology included pre and post-test surveys and seminars. Involvement with these activities resulted in more participants who strongly agreed (pre 91%, post 97%) that healing is the final step in conflict resolution process. Similarly, more strongly agreed (pre 90%, post 99%) that scriptures give examples of how to resolve conflict.

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

A document about Conflict Resolution and Parishioner Healing in the Church was very difficult to write for me, while experiencing the love and compassion of Christ on my life. I am greatly indebted to the many parishioners who were able to participate in the project. Especially, those who encouraged me in this project and have shown me the love of Christ.

I praise God for loving me, sending Jesus to save me, and the Holy Spirit for His comforting me and guiding me. I am amazed daily by you and your love for me. To my wife, Dawn Michele, who is the love of my life. You have supported me for over thirty-seven years, through my failures and successes. You really make the difference in everything that I have been trying to do. Eternally, I am grateful for you and I know that the best is yet come. To my sons, James Stacy and Jason Shawn, thank you for your patience with me, as I grow to be the man, father, pastor and roll model that God has called me to be in your lives. Thank you for understanding when I could not be with you due to work, ministry, and working on this Doctoral Project.

Dr. Harold Hudson, thank you for your wisdom, guidance, and leadership that has been a blessing to all the many students at United. Thank you for the friendship. It means more to me than words that can be written. To Dr. Sir Walter Mack, Jr., I want to thank you for mentoring me through this project. Thank you for allowing me to share with you in the shadows what could not be disclosed in the sunlight. Your wisdom and

knowledge has been a blessing in my life. I truly could not have come this far without you. Thank you for your advice and your friendship.

Dr. Eric Gladney, I want to thank you for mentoring me through this project. Thank you for being so scholarly and pushing me to dig deeper within to find the essence of what this project is all about, while at the same time glorifying Christ.

Dr. Carolyn Love and Mrs. Telza Perry, I want to thank you for pushing me to be excellent in everything pursued, especially in writing. Your consistent pushing me to be the best in academia has been a blessing in my life. Dr. Harry White, I want to thank you for being my big brother in Christ and for taking the time to work with me through this project as a professional associate. You are a friend for life! Dr. Michael Smith, I want to thank you so much and blessings on your life for being that big brother, who pushed me to excel in this project. Thank you for your support and encouragement. To Pastor Latonya L. Agard, I want to thank you for all of your help and words of encouragement as I started this project. Your help and support have been a blessing in my life, thank you for everything. I would like to give a special thanks to Ms. Claudette Grooms, Ms. Helen Artis and Tyronda Ricks for assisting me with this project.



## **DEDICATION**

Thanks to Michele, Stacy, and Shawn whose love made this feat possible. To all of my grandchildren, Jasmine, Alex, Chris, and to my parents James and Lucille Utley, I love you all unconditionally.

## **TABLES**

Table 1	Attitudes and Knowledge Regarding Conflict, Forgiveness and Healing .....	100
Table 2	Beliefs and Feelings Regarding Conflict Resolutions, Forgiveness and Healing.....	101
Table 3	Attitudes and Knowledge Regarding Conflict, Forgiveness and Healing .....	102
Table 4	Beliefs and Feelings Regarding Conflict Resolutions, Forgiveness and Healing.....	103

## FIGURES

Figure 1	Conflict Resolutions/ Healing Process .....	92
Figure 2	Field Experience Schedule .....	92

## **ABBREVIATIONS**

KJV	King James Version
MCMBC	Malaby's Crossroads Missionary Baptist Church
NKJV	New King James Version
NIV	New International Version

## **INTRODUCTION**

Conflict and interpersonal pain are as old as humanity itself. Hurt and anger are most commonly the emotions that accompany or come as a result of conflict. This hurt that humans typically endure, is can be spiritually and/or emotionally. No one is excluded from conflict or pain. Even Jesus, as well as his followers had to deal with their fair share of conflicts, problems and hurt. As a matter of fact, Christ's mission was not to eliminate conflict, but He came to provide future believers with alternatives to resolve conflict in a manner that would yield less hurt. He and His disciples set out to heal the brokenhearted, and to restore those who were in conflict within themselves and with others.

The mission of the church, which was motivated by agape love, has been to give Christians the platform to experience the healing and restoration virtues of Christ. People are crying out for help and it is responsibility of the church to respond by meeting the needs of those persons in a Christ-like love. This project presents a Leadership Development curriculum for effective programming in the Post Modern Generation which addresses these issues.

The focus of this progressive ministry model is to present strategies for conflict resolution in a congregational setting, which will yield emotional and spiritual healing for affected parishioners. Emotional healing involves one being restored inwardly in the areas that affect their perception of how they feel overall. Spiritual healing involves a

person being restored to the point, where they feel atoned with God. This is not just a role for clergy or those on the ministry, but is the ministry of every Christian in the church. This case study probed deeply and provided parishioners with an understanding of how God wants believers to resolve conflict within themselves and with their fellow parishioners through a sharing of stories.

Like many churches, Malaby's Crossroads Missionary Baptist Church has a need to enhance its ministry in conflict resolution, and spiritual and emotional healing. In addition, there is the need to make sure members are enlisted, equipped and ready to move forward in the ministry after resolution and healing, take place.

Many parishioners at Malaby's Crossroads Missionary Baptist Church are in search of people who have a relationship with God and not just religious. Once this identification takes place they can begin being transparent and sharing stories about their lives to those in the church. They are looking for spiritual healing, wholeness, acceptance, true friends, love and openness with people who can give attention to their unattended needs.

The researcher's life experiences have helped in shaping and molding him for the task of this project. It was the researcher's personal and his spiritual journey which served as a catalyst for him to finish this project with confidence. This conflict resolution and parishioner healing ministry project provided parishioners with a model that taught them how to communicate with one another and better understand one another within the church.

This project consists of six chapters. Chapter one provides a general background of the ministry focus at Malaby's Crossroads Missionary Baptist Church. Chapter two

discusses the state-of-art in ministry, and the impact this project had on the researcher.

Chapter three presents the researcher's understanding of the sociological and theological aspect of parishioner conflict resolution and healing according to the scriptures.

Chapter four with the researcher's methodology, which includes how the project was designed, the programs and persons who supported this project and participated in it. In chapter five, the researcher shows the implementation of the model through field experience. Finally, chapter six presents the researcher's results after the implementation of the model, as well as the researcher's commentary, thoughts, insights and recommendations as it relates to this project.

This project for conflict resolution and parishioner healing in the church is an exciting and effective model for ministry. The hope of the researcher is that this project will be widely sought out and implemented in other congregational settings. Within the pages of this document, one is guided through the process of selecting candidates and training them, through a series of workshops and role play activities which provide the opportunity for all participants to become better at resolving conflicts within an organization. The participants had to understand the biblical, historical, and theological foundations, of the project which provided a basis for them to develop the skills necessary to become successful problem solvers. As they probed deep enough with one another in this case study it was hoped that they would get a better understanding of how God wants believers to resolve conflict within themselves and with their fellow parishioners.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **MINISTRY FOCUS**

The development of this project did not begin when the researcher entered and completed phases one and two at United Theological Seminary. Actually, the seed for this project was planted through trials and watered with struggles long ago in the researchers' life. Through the experience of a wide variety of conflict in which he had to practice forgiveness, the researcher successfully achieved the healing after resolving the conflicts in his life. This process led to researcher journaling about his past and classifying it as predestined by God. This led the researcher to several milestones in his spiritual journey, including the one he is currently experiencing. The eldest of three sons of James and Lucille Utley of Raleigh, North Carolina, the researcher was born in 1955, at Saint Agnes Hospital, in Raleigh, North Carolina, which is on the campus of Saint Augustine University, a historical black college.

The researcher's childhood was a normal life in that he was blessed to have a father and a mother who lived in the home. The earliest memories that the researcher had, dated back to when, he visited his paternal grandmother. She worked in a store on the south side of town. When the researcher was around seven years old, his mother had been out all night looking for his father. Upon arriving back at the home, they noticed that there was water coming out of the front door of their apartment building; an event which would be pivotal for the entire family, especially the researcher's father.



When the door was opened, water ran down the stairs and out the front door. The researcher's mother and grandmother were shocked and amazed, and neither one of them had any idea where the water was coming. As they started going up the stairs, they saw the researcher's father asleep in the bathtub with the water still running. The researcher, not knowing how to feel at the moment, realized that his father was embarrassed, as he sat in front of his wife and his mother and had to explain what had happened. The feeling of guilt and shame that confounded his father was also felt by the researcher as well. The experience of an apartment being flooded by water had influenced the researcher, in some way, to pursue this ministry project.

The researcher remembers that during his adolescent years, many summers were often spent with his grandparents. These were great times for the researcher, because he was able to get away from the conflicts between his parents during those hard economic times. The researcher's grandparents lived in Clayton, North Carolina, located approximately twenty miles from Raleigh. They lived on an experimental farm where they grew certain types of produce. The researcher's grandparents were able to live on the farm as long as they could work, a process known as sharecropping. His grandparents became great nurturers, always encouraging and motivating the researcher to be better than they were. While the researcher was still between the ages of seven and eight, another pivotal point happened; his grandfather died. There was great sadness in the life of the Williams family that day. His grandfather had died in his sleep while rocking in a chair that night.

As the years went by, things became financially difficult the researcher began to see conflict between his parents get worse. The family conflict continued even after the

researcher's middle brother was born. At this point, the researcher thought that he was the reason for the family's stressful times. He also hypothesized that his parents would send him and his siblings to church so they would not see the arguments between them.

The researcher and his brother were baptized at the First Cosmopolitan Baptist Church. This was the church where the researcher began to learn a lot about Christian values. Mrs. Smith, the Sunday school teacher, was a disciplinarian in her classes. Teachers really cared enough about their students wanting to see all of them grow up with Christian values. Young men, who taught Sunday school, took great care in assisting and mentoring the researcher and his brother. Often, the Sunday school teachers, invited students into their homes and taught them what the scripture said about living the Christian life. While attending church, the researcher achieved another great milestone when he met the young lady who later became his wife of thirty-seven years. Although she was a member of another church, she came to First Cosmopolitan Baptist Church with her grandmother who was a member.

After many years of attending his church, the researcher was approached by his cousin, Deacon Alvis Ray, who was chairman of the deacon board. Deacon Ray brought the researcher's name before the deacon board to become a deacon. The researcher's pastor Dr. W. B. Lewis concurred that the researcher be ordained as a deacon as soon as he attended the required classes before ordination. After being ordained as deacon, the researcher stayed on the deacon ministry for twelve years. There was much growing in the Lord spiritually, which led to the researcher accepting his call to preach in 1996. The researcher talked with his wife and pastor, and after a year of mentorship, he was licensed to preach the Gospel. At the request of his pastor, the researcher enrolled at the Shaw

University Cape program where he received a four year degree in Philosophy and Religion. The researcher stayed involved in the ministries of the church, teaching in Sunday school and the Baptist Training Union, and working with youths who were incarcerated. All of these activities matured the researcher as God continued working through him.

After serving as associate to the pastor for seven years, the researcher continued his studies at Shaw University, graduating from the Cape program and then entering at Shaw University Divinity School. The researcher's pastor also encouraged him to apply for churches without pastors. After discussing it with his wife, the researcher submitted three applications for churches that had a vacant pulpit. An offer was made to the researcher to be the thirteenth pastor of the Malaby's Crossroads Missionary Baptist Church of Knightdale, North Carolina.

The first year at Malaby's Crossroad Baptist Church was very demanding and stressful for the researcher, due to nine funerals during the first two months, and due to the way executive decisions were made in the church. Most of the researcher's ideas could get done only if a few key people approved. The young pastor realized that he became stronger in his prayer life because of this. The pastor quickly realized that those key people at his church had insecurities, in which they displaced through their controlling of all executive decisions in the church.

It became clear to the researcher that through all of his years of growing up, seeing his parents struggle financially, and witnessing his family being buried under unresolved conflicts, those events prepared him for a greater reward ahead.

## Context

Malaby's Crossroads Missionary Baptist Church was founded in the 1800's by a white Baptist preacher named Henry Martin Tupper. Tupper journeyed to Raleigh, North Carolina from Wales, Massachusetts with a vision and a dream of God guiding him to minister to people in the south. With supporters from the north backing him, Tupper established Shaw University in 1865. The largest single donor was Elijah Shaw, a resident of Wales, Massachusetts, who donated \$5,000. Although the students at Shaw University studied a wide variety of subjects, Mr. Tupper's focused to train ministers to teach the Gospel. His vision was that as young men completed their degrees and graduated from college, they would be able to be stationed in newly formed churches.

One of the early established churches was located just east of Raleigh, North Carolina, in eastern Wake County near the vicinity of the Neuse River. Although times were hard for blacks in the early 1800's, the church began to grow and flourish. At the beginning, the church meetings were held in a frame house near the Neuse River. This meeting place eventually became known as The Crabtree Baptist Church. After a year of earnest labor in giving the church biblical instruction and preaching every Sunday, Rev. Harmon Pair was elected as the first pastor. There were times when the members of the church could not meet due to inclement weather, especially when the nearby river would swell. There were people who lived on the east side of the river and others who came to worship from the west side of the river.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Malabyscrossroads.org: available from <http://www.malabyscrossroads.org/history.html>, accessed Internet (November.15. 2010).

The decision was made in the early 1900's to separate the congregation into two groups. The group that lived near the west bank formed Elevation Missionary Baptist Church, which still occupies that spot today, just west of the Neuse River. The group on the east bank formed Malaby's Crossroads Missionary Baptist Church, located on Smithfield Road, the site where land was given by Walter Miles.

Throughout hundred years of history, the Malaby's Crossroads Missionary Baptist Church (MCMBC) has experienced many successes and has undergone many positive and negative changes. Malaby's Crossroads Missionary Baptist Church remained on the original site for approximately one hundred years. In 1912, land for the church's cemetery was purchased, two-tenths of a mile from the church on Smithfield Road.<sup>2</sup> The church's cemetery was founded by one of their first trustees, Wilson A. Anderson. The Church underwent major remodeling projects which took place in the late 1960's and early 1970's. This included placing brick over the church's preexisting wooden white frame, adding indoor toilet facilities, constructing a fellowship hall, installing stained glass windows. Cushioned pews, central air conditioner, and a baptismal pool were added as well. As time passed and the roads began to improve, the church began to grow as people began to move into the area. Malaby's Crossroads Missionary Baptist Church (MCMBC) constructed a new church in 2001 at Old Knight Road Knightdale, North Carolina 27545.

When the researcher first arrived in this area seven years ago, church members and residents of Knightdale had long history of belonging to the Eastern Stars and the

---

<sup>2</sup> Malabyscrossroads.org: available from <http://www.malabyscrossroads.org/history.html>, accessed Internet (November 15, 2010).

Masons. The researcher noticed that this affiliation had a great influence on the church decisions, the church activities, and the choice of church leadership. The researcher found out that many of the members did not schedule funerals unless they approved it with one of these organizations. There was an unexplainable loyalty that seemed only towards their organizations rather to Christ and the church. Instead of the pastor and the church officers making church decisions, non-office members were in charge of the executive decision making. Consequently, this caused a separation between the older and younger members.

Another area of concern by the researcher was the intolerance for female preachers in the pulpit. Malaby's Crossroads Missionary Baptist Church had never allowed any female preachers in the pulpit. Needless to say, the first two female ministers were licensed and ordained by the researcher in 2008. As a result of this decision, conflict arose among parishioners. There were both in favor of and against female ministers. Also, the trustees caused major problems which required even more conflict resolution in hopes of spiritual healing. To remedy this problem, the researcher connected with leaders and the congregation through bible study sessions, discipleship classes and teaching the proper way to lead and resolve conflict. The researcher hypothesized that there should have been as much teaching and workshops as possible so that the church's presence was felt beyond its wall.

One example included an after school tutorial and mentoring programs in the community. It has been mandated by Christ that Christians go out into the world to preach the gospel. However, the church must first seek to resolve conflicts within and encourage healing among its members.

## Synergy

The researcher of this paper is pursuing a Doctorate of Ministry degree at United Theological Seminary in Trotwood, Ohio. The desire to engage in the challenge of the project described in this paper evolved with the researcher's personal background dealing with his hurts and eventually receiving healing from the postmodern church. When the researcher recalled his parent's personal conflicts, starting with the memory of water flowing down the steps out the front door, he did not realize that this would be a turning point for him in this project. Not knowing how the water would be a source, metaphorically speaking, that birthed Malaby's Crossroads Baptist Church when the Neuse River would rise. The water that became a source of strength for the researcher also strengthens the faith community at MCMBC. The researcher was reminded of a familiar text in Ezekiel 47, in this chapter, there is a periscope where there were issues with the water rising. The Lord said to Ezekiel 47:8, "then he said unto me, these waters issue out toward the east country, and go down into the desert, and go into the sea: which being brought forth into the sea, the waters shall be healed." In essence, though the water had come to the man's ankles, then to his knees and finally to his waist, it did not overtake him. God told Ezekiel that everything along the river would be healed and fish would be multiplied. Everything along the river on both sides would grow and increase.

The researcher understood through that illustration, that what the devil meant for evil, God meant for good. His task was to save a generation, much like what the researcher's grandparents had done for him. There were members who fellowshiped

with the researcher but have now passed on but life goes on. Scripture reminds believers that there is a time to die and they soon did but God was still not through with him yet (Ecclesiastes 3:2).

There are similarities between the researcher's experiences with Malaby's Crossroads Baptist Church and experiences with his family members which were not very pleasant at times in the researcher's life. However, the miracle of it all was that God gave the researcher times to refresh and step back for introspection. As the researcher of this project remembered the life of his parents, he did not fault them or any other person for what may or may not had happen in his life. The researcher believed that God healed him and shaped him throughout this entire project. He believed that difficulties came to strengthen him for what was ahead. The researcher remembered times when his father mentored him to be the best he could possibly be. Even while in the military, the researcher remembered his parents giving him the best encouragement to make the best of the military. Also, when the researcher became a pastor, his father still actively instilled values as he had done in the past. This greatly benefited the researcher as pastor. As he began to get older and see things from a different perspective, he realized that God had allowed certain people to help mold him. There were people like Chief Tony Williams, who made the researcher appreciate his father more. Although his father never went beyond the sixth grade, he still was a good man in the eyes of the researcher.

There were people like Dr. Willie B. Lewis, the researcher's first pastor, who nurtured him and guided him during most of his spiritual journey and was who helped the researcher see Christ through the lenses of others.



With this transition of being a young pastor, the researcher began to speculate about the church in this postmodern culture. As he looked at the different dynamics within the two churches separated because of the Neuse River rising, the question became, “were they separated by time or water?” Elevation Baptist church seemed to progress with the current times and trends; However, Malaby’s Crossroads Baptist church stayed within the confines of its church and never progressed. The researcher saw how the church in a new edifice was a living organization, yet it had no real affect in the community that surrounded it. The researcher saw people who were in positions of leadership but who had a stronghold within the church which made it impossible for the church to move forward. People, who were in charge, such as the Trustee Board members, had major insecurities. They had no reverence for God. Their main objective was to ensure that the congregation knew they were in charge. The researcher began to see how this type of influence was not healthy for the church. This impacted the researcher during the early years of pastoring the church; However, as time went on, he understood that God’s providence was still at work.

Maybe this kind of traditionalism was in the church due to its history. The church was born out of another church because of the swelling of the Neuse River. As mentioned earlier, many of the church members lived both on the west side and the east side of the Neuse River. When the river would swell, it was difficult to attend church.

However, as the researcher began to look at this difference between Malaby’s Crossroads Missionary Baptist Church and Elevation Baptist Church, metaphorically speaking, he could see how it was God’s providence that led him to Knightdale, North Carolina.

The researcher recognized that there was a certain type of personality and leadership dynamic within the congregation that crippled church growth. The congregation never wanted to change. If change came, there were certain families that had to institute change. The researcher often wondered why there was so much of a disparity between the two churches. The church that stayed on the west side which was called Elevation Baptist Church was a church that was full of life and vitality and its pastor had changed many more times than the church on the eastern side. The researcher's church Malaby's Crossroads Missionary Baptist Church seemed to not want any changes for the future. Many families did not support their own members. Families often struggled within themselves. When classes on Christian Education or Stewardship, and Discipleship were introduced those who were in control on the trustee board would rebel. In addition, there were members of the congregation who had certain teaching responsibilities, and on other auxiliaries who were insecure in their ministries as well. To introduce them to Christian Education classes, dealing with subjects like discipleship, stewardship, sanctification, and regeneration was difficult. That was something that the older members did not want to address. The researcher could see himself in the same situation many years ago not wanting to believe that change would come within his own family. Once the researcher began to find Jesus, there were changes in his heart. He realized that this journey was not about him but it was about Jesus all along. God was not going to let the researcher go through his journey for nothing.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **THE STATE OF THE ART IN THIS MINISTRY PROJECT**

The post-modern Church era is again at a crossroads. As its decline in growth and membership continues to become more and more evident, and its focus tends to shift away from strong family values, the Church has to decide what direction it will take in this century. It must decide based on spiritual values, and not worldly standards. Many churchgoers have become disenchanted with the so-called traditionalism of the family-run denominational churches that have long existed, and are gravitating toward the less-controversial and less internally controlled non-denominational churches. They are in search of a church that is more experimental with regard to religion—one where they are free to worship without having to endure the kinds of issues that arise in the smaller, family-run churches. They want to be able to worship without the incessant controversies that arise over who is in charge, or who will run which auxiliary.

While there are many who still remain connected with these traditional churches because of strong family ties, tradition and, in many cases, security, they are faced with a huge void in their lives. They are not spiritually fulfilled and, as a result, they often function minimally as Christians. Yes, they do attend church. But seldom do they truly worship or experience a real relationship with God. As a result, we have a body of believers in Christ who are not functioning to their full capacity. Many are experiencing

brokenness that is manifesting itself in ways such as troubled marriages, relational, emotional, and mental problems, and subsequently an eventual falling away from the church. Based on the researcher's observation, and an exhaustive amount of inquiry and study, the researcher believes the Church should examine both Scripture and tradition and return to active participation in spiritual development that includes a disciplined prayer life and healing ministry.

The primary goal of this project was to develop a model that can be used for implementing conflict resolution and focus on parishioner spiritual, emotional healing among church membership. This model would undergird, strengthen, and expand the ministry of the local church and aid in individuality growth. Setting goals is an important prerequisite for planning and implementing a project such as this. Therefore, the researcher suggests that specific personal goals, as well as goals for the Church, be established at the outset. Having specific goals at the beginning of this project would enable the researcher to measure at least some of the effects of the project upon completion. The following is a list of the researcher's own personal goals and goals for the Church.

#### Personal Goals

1. To develop a model that can be used by clergy and parishioners to implement conflict resolution and healing spiritually and emotionally within and among that will strengthen, undergird, and expand the existing ministry of the local church and aid in individual growth.
2. To learn more about conflict resolution and healing from a pastoral perspective in other geographical areas.

3. To increase and improve the researcher's own spirituality through healing in Scripture.
4. To grow in the awareness of the many dimensions of both conflict resolution and healing spiritually and emotionally ministries.
5. To participate in a variety of healing services.

#### Church Goals

1. To foster the development of an increased awareness in parishioners of the need for conflict resolution and healing ministries in the Church.
2. To inspire interest in and recruit members for a conflict resolution and healing ministry in order to let go of the past.
3. To learn more about parishioner healing and conflict resolution through Bible study that will foster spiritual growth within and among parishioners.

Because the researcher believes people learn best when they are involved in the lessons rather than listening while others lecture, all lessons were interactive. This helped as each person was able to work individually as well as in group settings.

The main goal for the church was to help people to understand conflict resolution and parishioner healing from a biblical perspective to help foster growth. This was done during Wednesday night Bible studies. This enabled each person to become more familiar with scriptures regarding the subject, and to apply those scriptures to themselves, as well as through interaction with other parishioners.

### **Biblical**

Resources were reviewed to provide biblical, historical and theological support for this project during the time when Jesus walked the earth there has been a need of a physician someone to go to for healing. Although many of the people like the woman with the issue of blood had searched for years looking for a physician until she found Jesus. Wagner talks about in *Healing Service Just in Time*, how the church can still be a place for healing. This is another excellent tool for pastors and lay leaders to share in ministry regarding how to carry out a healing worship service. Wagner deals with the spiritual heart of humankind, therefore he believes the church can offer something that most hospitals do not offer, which is spiritual therapy.<sup>1</sup> By providing this to the congregation or group taking part in this project, it will help bring about healing in their individual lives, as well as collectively. Wagner gives his insight into how a healing ministry might fit into the local church.

In *Make Your Church A House Of Healing*, Gemignani gives solid biblical and practical support for addressing obstacles to healing that can better support the project. He discusses the problems of many congregants who have been wounded and that, because of not forgiving healing do not take place. It is an excellent guidebook for large or small congregations wanting to adopt a ministry that addresses parishioners healing for its members. Gemignani's text focuses on Jesus' vision for the Church primarily as a place for specifically diagnosing and treating spiritual illnesses. It is very appropriate because many churches are crying out for an authentically Christian focus and practical structures to implement this focus on spiritual healing. Gemignani's perspective

---

<sup>1</sup> James K. Wagner, *Healing Service, Just In Time*, (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2007), 3.

definition of Christ's purpose for His Church is based on solid biblical and psychological foundations. He believes that healing is not one of many programs of the church and local congregation. It is the central mission of the church and should be the central mission of every congregation.<sup>2</sup> The goal of this project is to have a healthy church where parishioner forgiveness and healing can take place, inwardly and outwardly. Sometimes, within the Church, congregations do not know how to conduct themselves after issues flare up and get out of control. Ronald Richardson's book *Creating a Healthier Church*, gives clear guidelines and directions on how to improve the quality of life in the congregation.<sup>3</sup> Every congregation that has struggled to maintain a balance between individuality and togetherness, closeness and distance, unity and difference, and every leader who has determined to stay out of emotional muddles of congregational life will find this book very helpful. It provides a practical set of leadership ideas and behaviors, as well as guidelines for how to behave in the midst of upsetting and conflicting circumstances, along with personal steps that church leaders can take to become a more positive force for healing and cooperation. Richardson helps us to understand how congregations function emotionally. Without being simplistic, he gives us a clear understanding of how the Church can work together to improve its quality of life and achieve its goals.

---

<sup>2</sup> Michael Gemignani, *Making Your Church a House of Healing*, (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 2008), 4.

<sup>3</sup> Ronald W. Richardson, *Creating Healthier Church*, (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 1996), 30.

## Historical

Another writer who shares his views on a model for pastoral counseling in his book, titled *Strategic Pastoral Counseling*, is David Benner. Benner gives clergy a strategic pastoral counseling tool to use that will be very helpful both for the pastor and the congregation. He says the average pastor spends six to eight hours a week counseling parishioners.<sup>4</sup> He adds that because of insufficient training and time pressures, most clergy don't have suitable time for counseling. The results could possibly frustrate pastors, and make their jobs less productive. Benner provides clergy and church-based counselors with a counseling model that is both particularly pastoral and psychologically informed. He understands that some forms of pastoral counseling have borne more resemblance to modern psychotherapy than historic Christian soul care, while other pastors have sought to distance themselves entirely from psychological counseling—seeking only to offer Bible-based spiritual counsel. Benner says there is a middle of the road between mimicking current psychological fads and ignoring the contributions of modern therapeutic psychology, and believes that pastoral counseling can be both distinctively pastoral and psychologically informed.

Terrie Williams's book is helpful for the clergy because it gives us another perspective and a glance at the struggles many in the African American community deal with, including clinical depression. In *Black Pain: It Just Looks Like We're Not Hurting, For When There's Nowhere to Go But Up*, Williams, a former top public relations executive, tells of her own struggle with depression. When she was diagnosed with

---

<sup>4</sup> David G. Brenner, *Strategic Pastoral Counseling*, 5<sup>th</sup> ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book Housing Company, 2007), 14.



clinical depression, she quickly discovered she was not alone and wanted to share her story. It just looks like we're not hurting, Williams confesses in the book. *Black Pain* is useful as a manual for church leaders who want to make sure their parishioners get the right kind of help by being diagnosed properly. This model will be adapted for some future plans for training. It will especially be helpful as churches establish healing ministries.<sup>5</sup> Similarly, Peter Steinke's book, *Congregational Leadership In Anxious Times*, illuminates the path toward a healthier and more effective church leadership.<sup>6</sup> It is a useful manual for clergy and lay leaders who are helping congregations navigate through difficult times. Steinke focuses on how a leader's spiritual and emotional maturities are key components of how congregations can learn and heal from traumatic events. The author's basic premise is that the leader's non-anxious presence acts as a counter balance to the mounting anxiety and restlessness that congregations face in the wake of challenges. Steinke speaks to life in the Christian community—how it is riddled with differences—and the fact that conflict is seldom far from us. Although conflicting views, stances, and opinions are given, he says, chaos and crisis need not follow. Whether conflicting approaches to mission and ministry lead to creativity and growth, or to polarized stand-offs, is largely a matter of how the key leaders are able to respond to the situation. While we may be tempted to lament or hide when conflict swirls into our lives, Steinke says there are productive ways to respond in the midst of difficulties.

---

<sup>5</sup> Terrie Williams, *Black Pain, It Just Look Like We're Not Hurting*, (New York, NY: Simon & Scriber Press, 2008), 200.

<sup>6</sup> Peter L. Steinke, *Congregational Leadership in Anxious Times*, (Herndon, VA.: The Alban Institute, 2008), 73.

His book is a useful manual for church leaders who want to see their churches grow in and through traumatic situations.

### *Theological*

In his book, *Healing in the Bible: A Theological Insight for Christian Ministry*, Dr. Frederick Gaiser focuses on how God accomplishes healing in all kinds of venues and in all kinds of ways.<sup>7</sup> He discusses how God heals through the work of Creation, the presence of Christ, the power of the Holy Spirit, and the prayers and support of His people. Gaiser also talks about how the stories of the Bible are as rich and varied as present-day experience, and attempts to listen to them all in their variety. This book is helpful to clergy because of the enormous grasp Gaiser has on issues dealing with health, and his careful analysis of healing stories in the Bible. Gaiser reminds us how healing is connected with ourselves, our relationships, our community, and with God. He also points out that our health is dependent on the wholeness of both individuality and our communities.

Dr. William Watley describes another ministry that will help equip the Church leadership in his book, *Preparing Joshua, Equipping the Next Generation for Leadership*.<sup>8</sup> Watley gives leaders, particularly clergymen, an opportunity to understand what it takes to equip the next generation for leadership. Watley gives insight and instructive measures for leadership development, addressing the practical issues of

---

<sup>7</sup> Gaiser, Frederick J. *Healing in the Bible: Theological Insight for Christian Ministry*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic 2010), 241.

<sup>8</sup> William D. Watley, *Preparing Joshua, Equipping the Next Generation for Leadership*, (Newark, NJ: New Season Press, 2006), 38.

leadership transition, succession and the handling of personal attacks. He also makes an intriguing argument in addressing Leaders with the Leader's Spirit. Watley reminds the clergy that sometimes people are empowered to fulfill certain responsibilities and become so focused on their assignment and responsibilities that spirituality becomes a secondary priority. Watley says that if a leader identifies spirituality and one's walk with the Lord as primary, then those who are empowered by the leader must model the same priority. He reminds the clergy that before leadership can be selected, they should meet personally with the clergy and the pastors to observe their openness to the move of God.

Philip Culbertson says in his book, *Caring for God's people, Counseling and Christian Wholeness*,<sup>9</sup> that the Church is marginalized in so many cultures today because a perpetuation of the way we've always done things renders us useless. Culbertson suggests that perhaps it needs to get worse in order to sound a wake-up call. The biblical models of ministry that we often think of are the story of The Good Samaritan or Jesus' healing of various individuals. Culbertson says we often overlook other metaphors of ministry, like the one in John, Chapter 10, where a shepherd is pictured as guarding and caring for a flock of 100 sheep and not simply the one that was lost. It is good that Culbertson knows that pastoral ministry in the new millennium means working among many types of people to whom we have traditionally offered one-on-one care and yet who need the sort of healing that God calls us to offer. This new challenge will mean that ministry must become an embracing and inclusive vocation—one that is not too quick to encircle itself and exclude others. Culbertson believes if ministry occurs primarily through

---

<sup>9</sup> Philip L. Culbertson, *Caring for God's People*, (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2000), 2.

our being, rather than through some bag of pastoral tricks, then self-knowledge can never be termed selfish but must be recognized as our primary tool for the effective ministry.

Another relevant book in this project that is also useful for Pastors and congregations is *The Face of Forgiveness*, authored by Dr. Johannes J. Christian. When a troubled teen who was fascinated with death through his callous behavior decided to throw a seven pound rock off a bridge in Springfield, Ohio. This rock struck a fifty year old minister by the name of Dr. Christian. Four years after this teenager's actions stole his sight and nearly his life, Dr. Christian reached out to his assailant. Dr. Christian admitted that the seed of forgiveness took a while to germinate but the Lord kept reminding him through prayer Give us this day our daily bread and forgive our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. Through difficult operations and nearly at the point of death, Dr. Christian found the strength through the power of forgiveness to forgive the young man by of Jacob McNary who changed his life. This action led this same young man to accept Christ. This book gives credence to the power of forgiveness that will be a source of strength to the faith community.<sup>10</sup>

### *Conclusion*

All of the references cited provided background information, strategies and ways of thinking about engaging parishioners in the process of a change for the better. Suggestions were made to help Christians grow, to heal and become more highly conformed to God. This project engaged parishioners in the interrelationship of physical, emotional and spiritual healing. Conflict resolution plus forgiveness is the process which leads to healing according to the sources reviewed.

---

<sup>10</sup> Johannes J. Christian, *The Face of Forgiveness A Memoir*, (Columbus, GA.: Brentwood Christian Press, 2005), 98.

## CHAPTER THREE

### THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

In his book *Healing Your Church Hurt What to do when you still love God but have been wounded by his people*, asserts by Stephen Mansfield book:

Conflict and interpersonal pain are as old as humanity. Perhaps not surprisingly, such difficulties have been present in the Christian Church from its origins, and are likely to be part of every human institution until the end of the age. Our contemporary culture certainly fans the flames of *ecclesia exitus*. Think about the way in which millions of people interpret fundamental Christian principles and behaviors. Grace is interpreted by many as a weakness to be exploited. Compromise is seen as a loss of substance or courage. Discernment is criticized as intolerance. Blame and retribution are preferred to forgiveness and mercy. In our society, behaving with kindness and humility is often considered with disdain: the choice of losers and wimps. The paradox inherent in all of this is that the inconsistencies and harshness of our society often drive us toward the most tangible and widely promoted expression of Christianity the local church an assumed oasis of perfection and goodness, a place where sinners are transformed into reasonable facsimiles of Christ Himself.<sup>1</sup>

In his book *Church is a Team Sport*, Jim Putman reaffirms that God wants His team to work together for His glory. Teamwork is essential to winning, and He believes that the church really is a team sport.<sup>2</sup> Conflicts have existed since the beginning of

---

<sup>1</sup> Stephen Mansfield, *Healing Your Church Hurt: What to do When You Still Love God but Have Been Wounded by His People*, (Austin, TX: Tyndale House Publishers, 2010), 9-10.

<sup>2</sup> Jim Putman, *Church is a Team Sport: A Championship Strategy for Doing Ministry Together*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing, 2008), 177.

recorded time. The book of Genesis presents to readers the first conflict which occurs as a result of Adam and Eve sinning. From that incident, the bible records that their offspring, Cain and his brother Abel, continue to operate in this newly emerged generational curse called conflict, which ended in the violent murder of Abel.

God responds to the ever present conflict created by sin and destroys the earth. In his book, *Making your Church a House of Healing*, Dr. Michael Gemignani states that “All members of the church are bound by their common membership in the body of Christ. Members share a common life in Christ in the same way that an organ of a human body shares in the life of that body. If the organ cannot function properly, the whole body suffers.”<sup>3</sup>

This ministry setting of the writer is Malaby’s Crossroads Missionary Baptist Church, an all black congregation of less than one hundred and seventy-five members, located in a rural community about twenty miles east of Raleigh, North Carolina. The history of the congregation, which began in the early 1800s, has been comprehensive of many challenges and conflicts. Many of the prior pastors were unable to serve as administrators because of preaching only twice a month. In the period of 1985-1993, the church began to operate on four Sundays out of each month. Before the pastors were considered circuit preachers because they would preach at MCMBC on two Sundays of the month then preach at another church two Sundays of each month. If there were any conflicts among the membership they were left to resolve them on their own.

---

<sup>3</sup> Gemignani, *House of Healing*, 52.

There were no teaching and guidance that were needed in resolving conflicts. Often the conflicts resulted in threats, mental, physical confrontations and bringing guns to conference meetings. Some of the harshest conflicts evolved from the lack of understanding relative to church stewardship. For purposes of this project a progressive ministry will be used based on scripture coming from the *MacArthur Study Bible* Colossians 3:13 “Bearing with one another, and forgiving one another,<sup>4</sup> if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you must do.” In essence because as followers of Christ the church uses Christ as the model of forgiveness, then those in the church must learn to forgive as Christ forgave. However, if there is no teaching in the church this makes reconciliation difficult and almost impossible.

The purpose of this project is two-fold: to work with the congregation in the current setting to help members to resolve conflicts that will promote healing from within the parishioner; and develop a design to address healing and forgiveness biblically, which will prepare the congregation to manage future conflicts. The biblical sections will focus on a study of Ezekiel 47 involving the vision of the Holy waters, their rise, extent, depth and healing virtue. Also Revelation 22:1 the River of life which is like no other river on earth, which symbolizes the continual flow of eternal life from God’s throne to heavens inhabitants. *The New Interpreter’s Bible* in (John 15:17), sends the same message as a progressive ministry theology which is being Christ like; loving one another; and compassionate.<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup> John MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible*, (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson 1997), 1838.

<sup>5</sup> C. Clifton Black, ed., *The New Interpreter’s Bible*, vol. 9, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995), 755.

The subject on conflict resolution can mean many things for all people. There are many churches that have had conflicts in their congregations. There are always negative over tones associated with conflict resolution. The church is supposed to be a safe haven, refuge for God's people. When members have been wounded and scared in the church they tend to turn away from the church and healing does not take place.

Peter Steinke writes in his book *Congregational Leadership in Anxious Times*:

According to several studies clergy are neither well prepared for handling conflict nor willing to engage in it. Generally, clergy are highly motivated to give and receive affection. Their warmth and kindness contribute to their personal qualities. But these same qualities limit their capacity for proactive behavior: being decisive and taking positions. Clergy hesitate to be assertive because such behavior may be seen as endangering the congregation's harmony and stroking the fires of unrest.<sup>6</sup> Steinke goes on to say a conflict-free congregation is incongruent not only with reality but even more biblical theology, Jesus upset many people emotionally. The life of Jesus takes place against a backdrop of suspicion, opposition, and crucifixion. The Christian story is underlined with conflict. Early on, the reader encounters the emotional reactivity of the religious leaders, who see Jesus as a threat to their authority and belief system. Eventually the tension between the roaming preacher and the established religious order comes to a dramatic point. Tension leads to crucifixion.<sup>7</sup>

Conflict involves a tug of war between the forces of sinfulness and against righteousness. The church has had divisiveness from its very inception. Conflicts are to be expected and can grow with intensity. When a church conflict has reached a level that is damaging against the body, it is beyond personal and relational, and has become a spiritual problem. Spiritual problems must have spiritual solutions in the church. It is

---

<sup>6</sup> Steinke, *Congregational Leadership*, 103.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 107.



the church leadership that has the responsibility to act to these spiritual predicaments and to alert the people of God. The writer sees conflicts as a very destructive force that if not dealt with can lead to divisiveness and is unhealthy for the church. Failure to respond to conflict in positive ways can lead to bad consequences. Understanding what the scriptures have to say about conflict resolution and healing from a biblical perspective can provide an opportunity to respond to conflicts early and constructively. Each response must lead the church toward a spiritually redemptive process of resolution and healing. The goal is to restore God's standards for church life all for His glory and honor.

### **Biblical Foundation**

#### **Old Testament**

As result of the past conflicts the writer experienced, both in his adolescent and adult years, the researcher chose Ezekiel 47 as his Old Testament Biblical foundation. This periscope exposed the researcher to a biblical view of healing. Embedded within this chapter is a vision of holy waters—their rise, extent, depth and healing virtue. These waters presented in Ezekiel 47 resemble in virtue the waters that flow through that beautiful city of God in (Revelation 22:1), which states, “And he shewed me a pure river of water of life clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.”<sup>8</sup> The flowing of the water provides an eschatological insight as it relates to the healing of the entire world to come. This healing water flows from the throne of God and from His Son, Jesus Christ. Ezekiel 47 gives reference to healing waters.

---

<sup>8</sup> Rev. C.I. Scofield, D.D., *The Scofield Study Bible* The Holy Bible, 1352.

Michael Gemignani states in his book *Making Your Church a House of Healing*, “If a church is to be a house of healing, and that the members of the body of Christ in that place must want their church to be a house of healing. Involvement in the healing ministry must be intentional, not accidental.”<sup>9</sup> He also writes that “the members must believe that Christ can exercise his healing with them as his instruments and that the church must not believe, or act as if, there should be no suffering among its members.”<sup>10</sup>

The waters described in this periscope rapidly increased as they continued to flow, and they became difficult to cross; likewise, the faith of the Church increases as the gifts of the Spirit are exercised in the midst of difficulties. There are times when feelings become overwhelming which resembles rising floodwaters; however there is healing found within the waters of that flood. For Ezekiel, he recognized that the same waters that surrounded and threatened him were the same waters where healing could take place. Ordinarily, the church tends to not view threatening waters as healing waters and therefore members of these churches run from waters due to the appearance that those waters will overtake and consume them, costing them their lives.

When the writer looked into the Scriptures, he observed how liberating the waters were for Ezekiel. The healing process began when Ezekiel stepped into the waters. As time progressed, Ezekiel went from being ankle-deep to knee deep and then to waist high. The extent of this river flows toward the eastern region, and enters by way of the Dead Sea, which lies southeast of the sea of Tiberias and northeast of the great sea. It appeared as though the waters would overtake Ezekiel, but they did not.

---

<sup>9</sup> Gemignani, *House of Healing*, 19.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 20.

Instead, the waters carried life and purpose. Ezekiel's revelation from where he was taken, from the outer court to the North gate, became challenging for him. Ezekiel's life and his experience prove that just because one has a calling on their life; their calling does not exclude them from dealing with conflict. According to biblical history, the Dead Sea was a symbol of death and destruction. There was a stench of sulfur, which represented judgment as stated in Genesis 19; however, God proves through experience of Ezekiel that healing could take place even in environments that had a mantra of death and destruction. This sea that historically caused death and destruction was the sea that brought forth multitudes of fish. The Bible says in (Ezekiel 47:9) that fishermen with an abundance of fish would find trade in that region because there would be as much fish as there was the Mediterranean Sea.

In his book, *Healing Services*, James K. Wagner says, "How Christians do not have a monopoly on healing as some believe. Wagner points out that God loves the entire world, Christians and non-Christians alike, and that He has unlimited avenues for healing—many ways of curing the ills of humankind."<sup>11</sup> Healthcare professionals, religious as well as non-religious, are engaged in various aspects of healing ministry even though they may not acknowledge God's grace and benevolence. Regardless, God continues to provide healing for all. And even though the healing of God may be misinterpreted and classified as something else, Wagner says, "Healing ministry is not magic, sleight of hand, or hocus-pocus."<sup>12</sup>

---

<sup>11</sup> Wagner, *Healing Bible*, 2.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 3.

The God of Israel is a God of hope and a God who heals. In his book, *Healing in the Bible*, Frederick J. Gaiser writes, “The Bible bears particular witness to God’s healing, thus providing the world with important resource in our present quest for meaningful and abundant life. However, we enter that quest aware of the finitude and mortality of the people in the Bible, and of our own. Healing is not a guaranteed right of certain people of faith; it is God’s surprising gift to all people everywhere.”<sup>13</sup> Gaiser believes what the Lord said in the book of Exodus 15:26 in the *MacArthur Study Bible*, “And said, If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God, and wilt do that which is right in his sight, and wilt give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am the Lord that healeth thee.” Since Jehovah-Rapha is the one who heals, then obedience to the Divine’s instructions and guidance will obviously bring healing.<sup>14</sup>

In Ezekiel’s vision, coming from the *MacArthur Study Bible* is “a river flows eastward from the temple and down into Arabia where it then enters the Sea. When it empties into the Sea, the water becomes living meaning that the water is no longer salty. As a result of this transformation, there is an abundance of fish. Where there is fresh water, there is life. The presence of the fresh water produced fruit trees of all kind along the banks of the river. The leaves of these fruit would not wither, nor would the fruit

---

<sup>13</sup> Gaiser, *Healing Bible*, 7.

<sup>14</sup> MacArthur, *Study Bible*, 119.

fail. The trees will yield fruit because the water from the sanctuary flowed to them, and their fruit served for food and their leaves served for healing (Ezekiel 47:8-12).<sup>15</sup>

The writer sees this transformation in Ezekiel that talks about restoration of that which was dead and the river reflects flowing water that results in new life—where fruit begins to grow and fruit began to yield. All of this life is flowing from the same place as depicted in Ezekiel 47, from the throne room of God, and centered with His presence of the Holy Spirit and the Lamb of God who is Christ Jesus. This is the same water of life that overtook Ezekiel; the same water that brought about healing in the land.

In the same manner, Christians who feel overtaken by the cares of the world are reassured through God as God comforts them through the Holy Spirit and lets them know He has not forgotten them.

In this vast universe, where billions of galaxies exist, God who is omnipotent and omniscient, sent His Son—the One who was there from the beginning of Creation—to become one of the creatures that He created. God did it because of mankind's need. It was not about human beings—Christian or non-Christian—gaining lives of vain riches and earthly pleasures or making an everlasting impact on earth. The human being's need was more spiritual than physical in the respect that all were created to have fellowship with God and to do His will. The writer knows that Christians cannot forget that Jesus came because He loved humanity and wanted to deliver to humanity the truth about the kingdom of God, and His coming would prove that He was the final sacrificial offering for the world's sins. According to the *MacArthur Study Bible*; Jesus

---

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 1221.

says in (John 10:10) “I have come that they may have life and that they may have it more abundantly.”<sup>16</sup> The writer believes that it was Gods intention all along for His people to have life more abundantly. In Ezekiel this is God restoring life more abundantly again.

As believers in Christ, Christians should grow spiritually every day in the knowledge of God. One of the things the writer believes is that God has already provided a way for Christians to overcome the world. However, sometimes the believers miss some of the most important lessons that God reveals in His Word. God wants every believer to have life in abundance. Jesus Christ redeemed the world from sickness, poverty and death by providing healing, life abundantly and eternally. It is not something that the believer will receive when they die and go to heaven, but something that as they grow in the knowledge of God through the leading of the Holy Spirit; they learn to walk with Christ in this world.

Michael Gemignani in his book *Making Your Church a House of Healing* writes, “A church must provide a Christian framework a context of faith, hope, and love grounded in Christ that helps its members lives. The church should draw its members into a meaningful relationship, of embracing Christ, although the church must keep in mind that spiritual depth and deep faith do not imply that a Christian will not suffer.”<sup>17</sup>

The stage is set in John’s revelation as he is seeing into the future of the holy city that will one day be healing for all nations. This revelation gives a clear picture of a new earth and a new heaven that will reign throughout eternity. The four and twenty

---

<sup>16</sup> MacArthur, *Study Bible*, 1603.

<sup>17</sup> Gemignani, *House of Healing*, 20.

elders, the saints from every tribe and language of all people will reign forevermore.

The river of water of life is the essence of that city for the healing of nations. Every kindred spirit will have healing that flows from the throne of God.

In (Luke 9:1-2), Jesus commanded His disciples to heal in His name. James K.

Wagner states in his book *Healing Services*:

This directive from Jesus was meant not only for the early Church, but also for the Church today. When there are regularly scheduled healing services in the Church, these services proclaim to the congregation and to the surrounding community that God is on the side of good health and welcomes all who seek help, hope, and healing. It is important to note that the 'healing for the nation' referred to in the Book of Revelation is future tense and refers to the Church today. However, Christians must understand they do not have a monopoly on healing.<sup>18</sup>

God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, meaning God cares for the entire world. Many today are out of touch with God, and don't realized that the God of the Holy Bible has unlimited resources, and many avenues for healing. What the New Testament saints have today that many of the Old Testament saints did not have is the risen Savior, Jesus Christ. The *MacArthur Study Bible* states in Isaiah, "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed"<sup>19</sup>

Jesus Christ today who is the Healer. The Bible states in (Galatians 3:13) that, "Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us [Christians or the entire world]; for it is written, cursed is everyone that hangs on a

---

<sup>18</sup> Wagner, *Healing* , 1.

<sup>19</sup> MacArthur, *Study Bible*, 1038.

tree.”<sup>20</sup> We are not responsible for our salvation, but Christ paid the price. He purchased our salvation and bought us with His death on the Cross. James K. Wagner in his book, *Healing Services* says, “Faith is critical in healing, because what counts is placing one’s personal trust, belief, and faith in God, is the Divine Physician.”<sup>21</sup> Wagner says “a close examination of every healing story of Jesus in the four gospels reveals that faith in God to heal is present in someone.”<sup>22</sup>

Although, healing is essential in the Bible, but healing brings about restoration being renewed. In chapter forty-sever, Ezekiel describes how the land of Israel will be restored, including its regeneration, and Israel’s renewed worship in the millennial kingdom. God was offended by the idolatry and apostasy of the people of Israel. They violated the Mosaic Covenant, which had bound them to the Lord, and they had prostituted their faith. Ezekiel, however, foresaw a future day; one when the Israel would be restored to the land worshiping God in a new Temple in the millennial kingdom. Ezekiel describes the return of God’s glory to this new future Temple as coming from the east and had served as Ezekiel’s eschatological description of how God would convert and restore the nation to the land.

Under the Messiah’s rule, God would bring them back into the land where they would enjoy rest and peace in the kingdom. The Hebrew people would be converted as God gave them a new heart and put his Holy Spirit within them. After the Lord destroys their northern enemy the land is cleansed and prepared for millennial worship.

---

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 1793.

<sup>21</sup> Wagner, *Healing*, 3.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 4.



Paul Enns in his book *The Moody Handbook of Theology* writes;

There are at least five distinct purposes for the millennial Temple:  
 1) To demonstrate God's holiness; the infinite holiness of Jehovah's nature and government had been outraged and called into question by the idolatry and rebellion of his professed people. This has necessitated the judgment of sinful Israel along with wicked surrounding nations. This followed by the display of divine grace in restoring the prodigal nation to Himself. 2) To Provided a dwelling Place for the Divine Glory. This is the place of my throne, and the place of the soles of my feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel forever. 3) To Perpetuate the Memorial of Sacrifice. It is not sacrifice, of course, rendered with a view of obtaining salvation, but sacrifice commemorative of an accomplished salvation maintained in the presence of the revealed glory of Jehovah. 4) To Provide the Center for Divine Government. When the divine Glory takes up its residence in the temple, the announcement is not only that the temple is God's dwelling-place and the seat of worship, but also that it is the radiating centre of the divine government. This is the place of my throne. 5) To Provide Victory over the Curse. From under the threshold of the temple house the prophet sees a marvelous stream issuing and flowing eastward in ever increasing volumes of refreshment until it enters in copious fullness into the Dead Sea, whose poisonous waters are healed. Traversing the course of this wondrous life-giving water, the seer finds both banks clothed with luxuriant growth of trees of fadeless leaf and never-failing fruit, furnishing both medicine and food.<sup>23</sup>

Ezekiel began his prophecy by describing the glory of God and concluded his book by describing the return of God's glory to the millennial Temple. Ezekiel thus describes God's judgment and victory over sin whereby His glory can manifest to His people Israel and to the nations of the world. These waters became a river of healing and the source of abundant life for everything and everyone. It kept flowing southeast

---

<sup>23</sup> Paul Enns, ed., *The Moody Handbook of Theology*, (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1989), 69.

through the dry and rocky region between Jerusalem and the Dead Sea. The flow continued through the eastern region and south along the Jordan valley, the Jordan Rift and as far as to the Dead Sea.

## **Biblical Foundation**

### New Testament

The scriptures in the New Testament that describes prophecy and healing influence the direction of this progressive ministry project. The writing of Revelations occurred when John who, was the last surviving apostle and an old man, was in exile on the small barren island of Patmos. Patmos was located in the Aegean Sea southwest of Ephesus and Paul spent the remainder of his life there as a result of the Roman authorities who had banished him there due to his faithful preaching of the gospel.

John MacArthur, in *Revelation, the MacArthur Study Bible*, writes,

While on Patmos, John received a series of visions that laid out the future history of the world. When he was arrested, John was in Ephesus, ministering to the church there and in the surrounding cities. Seeking to strengthen those congregations, he could no longer minister to them in person and, following the divine command John addressed Revelation to them. The churches had begun to feel the effects of persecution; at least one man probably a pastor had already been martyred and John himself in exile. However the storm of persecution was about to break in full fury upon the seven churches so dear to the apostle heart. To those churches, Revelation provided a message of hope. God's sovereign control of all events of human history and though evil often seem pervasive and wicked men all powerful, their ultimate doom is certain. Christ will come in full glory to judge and rule.<sup>24</sup>

---

<sup>24</sup> MacArthur, *Study Bible*, 1889.

In his book, *The Apocalyptic Literature*, Stephen Cook writes, “Revelation is not traditional prophecy, but a full blown apocalypse. It is biblical prophecy’s summation and finale, not merely an additional exemplar. The visions of the book whisk John to heaven and disclose transcendent reality. The reality, John quickly learns, is about to invade earth supernaturally and thunderously, establishing the reign of God.”<sup>25</sup> This is a threat of conflict and persecution of the church. Revelation reveals and unveils the glory of Jesus Christ through the truth about him and his final victory to which the rest of scripture alludes. This fact becomes clear and visible through revelation.

The heavenly vision, shown to John in (Revelation 22:1) gives John a chance to see what the millennial kingdom will be like. There are no more wars, famines, diseases or earthly catastrophes, but there was a continual blessings as Ezekiel saw similar to what John describes below in the *MacArthur Study bible*:

And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the middle of the street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him. They shall see His face and His name shall be on their foreheads. There shall be no night there: They need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light. And they shall reign forever and ever (Rev. 22: 1-5).<sup>26</sup>

Christ taught that his return would be a literal, physical event; He would return in the same way as the disciples saw him depart. He also taught that His return would be a comfort to His followers because He would take them back with Him to his Father’s

---

<sup>25</sup> Stephen L. Cook, *The Apocalyptic Literature* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2003), 199.

<sup>26</sup> MacArthur, *Study Bible*, 2024.

house. The time of His return is unknown. Therefore, people should prepare for His coming by being good stewards to receive His commendation and rewards. The church should not be in turmoil or conflict, but should promote healing within and among parishioners.

In his book, *Faith Seeking Understanding*, Daniel Migliore writes, “In the New Testament the Spirit of God is a prominent actor. The Synoptic Gospels describe the life and ministry of Jesus as empowered by the Spirit from beginning to end.”<sup>27</sup>

Christ’s mission was to redeem man back to God. There is a spiritual and a literary meaning found in the story of the man lying by the pool of Bethesda in (John 5:2-15). Although the scripture says the pool was filled with natural water, those who found their way to the pool did not make contact with something that was natural. They did not have a relationship with the natural water of the pool, but they had come in contact with the spirituality of the water in the pool. The man had lain by the pool for many years, waiting for someone to put him in the water so that he could receive healing. When Jesus came by, there was a connection with the spiritual and eternal that brought healing to the man.<sup>28</sup> The man simply made the connection that others had made who had stepped over and around him. This man, like so many had finally made the connection with God because Jesus confronted him and asked a simple question: “Do you want to be made well or whole?” The Bible says there was a great multitude of impotent folk who waited for the moving of the water in that pool, which signifies a

---

<sup>27</sup> Daniel L. Migliore, *Faith Seeking Understanding* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2004), 227.

<sup>28</sup> MacArthur, *Study Bible*, 1587.

disturbing or troubling of the water. The people, no doubt, believed in the divine healing of the disturbance of the water and wanted to be the first to be healed. The pool was called Bethesda in the Hebrew language, which means “House of Mercy.” This impotent man who had laid at one of the porches for 38 years is symbolic of many in the Church today—those who labor under infirmity that prevents their deriving spiritual strength and support from the Word of God. This man replied to Jesus, “Sir, I have no man when the water is troubled; to put me into the pool; but while I am coming, another steps down before me.” This man had no one who was willing to help him into the pool so that he could get healed. This conveyed the actions and consequences of evil self-love, or the love of the world, which prevailed over heavenly love. This may be the case even today with congregants who do not seriously purpose to obey God’s Word. There are those who do not forgive, and for selfish or worldly motive and means, interfere and hinder God’s will for themselves and unfortunately, for others. Michael Gemignani in his book *Making Your Church a House of Healing* talk about the clearest sign that we have forgiven someone is when we do not want to see the other party who offended or wronged us suffer anymore.

Jesus knew the man had been there a long time when He asked, “Will you be made whole?” He knew the man’s infirmity as well as his heart’s desire and intention to be healed. Jesus knew the man would be willing to obey His instructions. His words had spiritual meaning as well that relate to the Church today. How far are Christians willing to go and are our hearts sincere in obeying God so that we truly can be made whole—spiritually and in every way? According to the *MacArthur Study Bible* when Jesus said to the impotent man, “Rise, take up your bed and walk,” immediately, the man was

made whole, and took up his bed and walked.<sup>29</sup> When Jesus' words are viewed from the literal sense, we see how God was one hundred percent human and one hundred percent divine, all at the same time. Through His mercy, healing was manifested in this man's body. When Jesus said to the impotent man, "Rise," He announced His divine power to elevate the man up to Himself, as the divine source of all good. When He further says, "take up your bed," He announced the same power near at hand to elevate his natural mind with all its persuasions to the same source. Lastly, Jesus said, "and walk." He took the man to another elevation of living according His Divine Word.<sup>30</sup>

In his book, *Healing in the Bible*, Fredrick Gaiser writes, "God heals through the work of creation, through the presence of Christ and through the power of the Holy Spirit."<sup>31</sup> When the man was immediately made whole and took up his bed, and walked, it signified purification from evils, through the reception of the cleansing power of the divine truth. Thus, healing took place in this man's body and his life. Jesus came at a time when many needed a touch from the hand of God. Though Jesus traveled in a relatively close proximity, from Judea, Samaria, and Galilee, the scope of His ministry reached far and wide throughout the world. As stated in the *MacArthur Study Bible* in Revelations 22: The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations." Jesus healing ministry will continue throughout the ages.<sup>32</sup> Jesus said to His disciples in Acts, "But ye shall

---

<sup>29</sup> Gemignani. *House of Healing*, 113.

<sup>30</sup> MacArthur, *Study Bible*, 1587.

<sup>31</sup> Gaiser, *Healing Bible*, 3.

<sup>32</sup> MacArthur, *Study Bible*, 2024.

receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

Healing did not take place until Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist and endured the temptation in the wilderness. (Matthew 3: 13-17) says:

Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. But John forbid him saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness. Then he suffered Him. And Jesus, when He was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo the heavens were opened unto Him, and He saw the spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon Him. And lo a voice from heaven saying, this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.<sup>33</sup>

These key verses coming from the *MacArthur Study Bible* give an understanding that Jesus was baptized and commissioned by the Father to begin His earthly ministry after His wilderness experience. The disciples did not begin their ministry until they obeyed Jesus’ instructions to wait until they had received power from Heaven—the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. This is the same Lord and Spirit that was needed for witnessing to the whole world. One might ask, what power was it that they were receiving from on high? Jesus told the disciples in (Acts 1:5), “For John truly baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.”<sup>34</sup> This is the power that comes from the Spirit of God, the power that opened the eyes of the blind, and converted the hearts of the unbelievers. This is the power that raised the dead.

---

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 1397.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 1632.

This is the power that is promised to the redeemed. This is the power of the Holy Spirit who lives in you and can abide upon you. It was the power of God that the disciples needed to preach the Word of God and to perform signs, miracles and healings as a testimony to the authority of God's saving gospel. In other words, these disciples could not do what was needed and required of them until God sent the Holy Spirit. It was the Holy Spirit who empowered them to preach and teach the Word of God.

Jesus gave the disciples authority in the (Acts 1:8); "But ye shall receive power, after the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."<sup>35</sup>

The manifestation of spiritual gifts is evident in the New Testament, as well as in the Old Testament. God repeatedly reminded His children that He was 'Jehova-Rafa,' which is translated, 'the Lord our Healer.' Jesus went throughout Galilee teaching in the synagogues, preaching the Good News of the kingdom of God, and healing every disease and sickness among the people. News about Him spread throughout the land. All across Syria, people were brought to Him that had every kind of disease, those who were demon-possessed, and those having seizures—and He healed them all. John preached that Jesus was anointed with the Holy Spirit, by God and how He went around doing good, healing all who were under the power of the devil (Acts 28:18).

In the *MacArthur Study Bible* the Pharisees accused Jesus of performing miracles by the power of the devil. Jesus wanted the Pharisees to know that the kingdom of God had come unto them. In the New Testament, the healing power of

---

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 1633.



Jesus is portrayed as a key element for attracting public attention and for inspiring faith in First Century Palestine. Spiritual healing is mentioned sixty-five times in the synoptic gospels. In Acts 12, episodes of miraculous healing, by the followers of Jesus are recounted. Specific cases of healing by Jesus are referred to 49 times, and general or unspecified references occur 16 times. A specific episode is often repeated in two or three of the synoptic gospels. In all, twenty-four healings by Jesus of specific individuals are found. The question is, “Could all of these episodes have the result of good propaganda?” People came from far and near and some traveled great distances to the expected sites of healing (Mathew 12:22-32).<sup>36</sup>

Many times in Scripture, Jesus healed from a distance by praying or just speaking words concerning the one who was sick. This occurred in the account of the miraculous healing by Jesus who healed the servant of a Roman centurion. The Bible says that Jesus listened to the centurion’s request, and was astonished at his faith. Jesus simply spoke words of assurance that the servant would be made well. When the centurion’s messengers returned home, they found the servant in perfect health.

In the district of Tyre and Sidon, a Canaanite woman approached Jesus asking for help for her daughter, who was tormented by a devil. Jesus said to the woman, “O woman great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt” (Matthew 15: 21-28). Upon returning home the woman found her daughter completely well. According to the *MacArthur Study Bible in Luke* (17:11-19), as Jesus was nearing Samaria on His way to Jerusalem, Jesus was hailed by 10 lepers.<sup>37</sup> They asked Him to have pity and heal them.

---

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 1414.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 1549.

From a distance, Jesus called out to the ten, saying, “Go and show yourselves to the priests.” As they went, the lepers discovered they had each been cured of their disease. The Bible says that one of the ten, a Samaritan, turned around and came back to thank Jesus and praise God for his healing.

The Bible is filled with conflicts and healing throughout the scriptures which connect both the Old and New Testaments. However, Jesus came as a fulfilling of the Old Testament and a promise of the New Testament to usher in the truth about the Kingdom of God. The Bible deals with healing from different levels because of God’s relationship with humanity.

In, *Healing in the Bible*, author Fredrick J. Gaiser offers insight for Christian ministry that says like human beings which we are, healing is a matter of life and death, a part of the perpetual pursuit of happiness, and self-preservation.<sup>38</sup> Gaiser says, “Psalm 6 is a prayer which deals with a person in great distress who turns to God for healing.” The psalmist appeals to God “stead fast love,” to counter both internal personal suffering and external attack by certain “enemies.” When most Christians read the Psalms, Gaiser says, they do not learn the precise nature of the prayer distress. Fredrick Gaiser in his book, *Healing in the Bible* gives two distinct reasons for this: The first reason is liturgical. The Psalms, he says, “are communal use so that they may be used as a tool for prayer. He says the more explicit the references to the nature of the illness, the less usable the psalm would be for those whose illness is different.” The second reason

---

<sup>38</sup> Gaiser, *Healing Bible*, 8.

is “the psalm functions in a world of connectedness. Gaiser says all illness, at least serious illness, has an effect on the whole person. It is not I have an illness, but the illness has me.”<sup>39</sup>

In another scripture (Psalms 31:9), for instance, says, “My eye wastes away from grief, my soul and body also.” In other words, whatever the physical symptoms, they have a broader significance that produces emotional and spiritual consequences, and vice versa. It would appear that after healing took place in the Bible, and down through the ages of time, that life really matters to people. Also the interest of healing one assumes that life matters, that when the world does not matter but the next world does, as one described in (Revelations 22:1-3). Gaiser says that “humans are finite; only God is infinite. If immortality were the human condition, there would be no reason for the Tree of Life in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 2:9; 3:22).”<sup>40</sup> Fredrick Gaiser in his book *Healing in the Bible* says “that the curse of sin is not mortality, but rather the terrible refusal of death to stay where it belongs at the end of a long rich life.”<sup>41</sup>

The writer can appreciate why Jesus disciples left everything to follow Him. The writer of the *MacArthur Study Bible* says “Mathew says Christ will come back on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.”<sup>42</sup> *The MacArthur Study Bible* goes on to

---

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 15.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> MacArthur, *Study Bible*, 1389.

call Him a victorious King where the gospels quote sixty times from the Old Testament prophetic passages, emphasizing how Christ is the fulfillment of those promises.”<sup>43</sup>

Fredrick Gaiser in his book, *Healing in the Bible* says “that God is first and forever pro-life. Healing is, therefore, God’s business. Just as it is in the Old Testament and New Testament, something begins to happen that healing changes everything. Still the artistic makes a valid theological point—God is finally a God of justice and healing. At last, healing will be full, and evil will be overcome. This is the hope of the Old Testaments saints, and it continues to inform the people of God. The healing is not finally dependant on all of human prayer; the initial appeal is to Yahweh’s steadfast love.”<sup>44</sup> Human prayer, however, is not without meaning. It calls upon God’s love and invites it into the present. Prayer, in league with Yahweh’s covenant faithfulness, can open the world to the surprise of divine healing.

### **Historical Foundations**

From the very beginning of the known world there has been conflict that has existed among humanity. The historical point of view the writer went back to the time of Moses and the children of Israel Exodus from Egypt. Sy, Barbara and Daryl Landau in their book, *From Conflict to Creativity* says, “Conflict exist in all human relationships; it always has and probably always will. We are continually in conflict with our parents, our children, our colleagues, and almost everyone else we deal with. This does not make us bad people or even innately aggressive. Conflict is natural. It

---

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 1390.

<sup>44</sup> Gaiser, *Healing Bible*, 16.

stems from the fact that we each have our own interests (needs, concerns, goals, and priorities) and are concerned that others may prevent us from satisfying them.”<sup>45</sup>

As they traveled through the wilderness they were upset and angry, and complained of being hungry and thirsty. This story of Israel’s complaining is pictured as increasing conflict. Though they had every reason to trust in God after their miraculous delivery, the people complained. They complained against the leadership of Moses, and murmured against God for taking them away from their home, in Egypt and bringing them into a desert land. It was their own bitterness that matched the water that they could not drink. The story is a healing story in a double sense. Not only is the bitterness of the water ‘healed’ as the water healed in, but you also have the bitterness of Israel. God is a God who will deal with both situations and issues that heals them. Moses’ response was healing as well; even though the people complained, Moses interceded for them. What better way to call the healing process to move forward for the people of God.<sup>46</sup>

It is the same way with members of a Church congregation when complaints arise as Ronald Richardson says in his book *Creating a Healthier Church*:

Increased anxiety in an organization generally shows up in such things as members being consistently late for meetings or failing to show up at all; members being apathetic or frequently in conflict; patterns of illness or accidents; coalitions and cliques being formed; secrets being kept; patterns of functioning in which one person “does it all” or no one does much of anything. There are a fairly large variety of specific ways things can go wrong in a congregation. Also when a larger number of members compliantly accept what is offered to them by the church, become rebelliously focused on church authorities, enter into a variety of types of power struggles, simply withdrawn from life of the church, or cut off entirely and move their membership elsewhere, these can all be symptoms of pervasive anxiety in the church system. These symptoms do not represent different types

---

<sup>45</sup> Sy Landau & Barbara Landau & Daryl Landau, *From Conflict to Creativity: How Resolving Workplace Disagreements Can Inspire Innovation and Productivity* (New York, NY: Jossey-Bass, 2001), 3.

<sup>46</sup> Gaiser, *Healing Bible*, 22.

of problems that need different solutions; they are all manifestations of higher levels of anxiety within the emotional system of the congregation.<sup>47</sup>

The children of Israel needed someone to blame for their hurt, and Moses was their choice. If Moses had turned against the Israelites the way they rebelled against him, the opportunity for healing would have been lost they would have stayed in conflict. Such is the case in the Church. If the pastors were to turn against the congregation because they rebelled against them, then there would be no chance of healing ever taking place. The congregation and the pastor would stay in conflict and miss any opportunity for healing. This is why forgiveness is so important to the congregation. Dr. Johannes J. Christian in his book *The Face of Forgiveness*, realizing after the accident of leaving him without a face and no hope to live. The rock that was intentionally dropped from a bridge by a teenager while he was driving his car was able to write to that teenager and encourage him with forgiveness after having over sixty surgeries he writes:

I hope this letter finds you in the best health. How are your parents doing? You have not mentioned them in your letters. I pray that things are going well with them. I hope that you do not mind me writing to you. I think that it is good therapy for the two of us. It is my heart's desire that you will learn to love yourself unconditionally, I think that this will be easier for you is you know that I am not only forgiving you for your actions, but I pray that God will continue to help me to love you as I love myself. I am convinced that God's grace of forgiveness given to us is an example of measure of forgiveness that He requires of us. Jesus said my peace I leave with you, and I trust you are able to find the peace of God in your life.<sup>48</sup>

---

<sup>47</sup> Richardson, *Healthier Church*, 132.

<sup>48</sup> Christian, *Face of Forgiveness*, 133.

Moses had every reason to defend himself against the Israelites, and at times it seemed as though he wanted to retaliate. But Moses realized that healing was required that they overcome their natural anger, and seek the heart of God instead. Moses actions reflected what Jesus said to His disciples years later in( Matthew 5:44), “But I say to you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you.”<sup>49</sup> When we look at how God responded to the situation of the children of Israel, or Moses’ dilemma in dealing with them, God responded by elevating the water problem to a new level of healing. His sweetness, gentleness and kindness overcame their bitterness.

Although the healing came from a piece of wood, how was that healing addressed? There could not have been any known rational explanation within the Bible to explain that cause and effect—nothing short of a miracle from God showing signs and wonders of His majestic power. Even in the history of Israel, many scholars have wanted to prove whether or not this miracle could possibly have happened. Could it have been by magic or something in the wood that was transformed into a type of medicine? However, what is clear that God is the same God who acted on Moses behalf for the children of Israel through their moment of bitter complaining.

Jim Putman in his book *The Church is a Team Sport* writes, “Jesus knew that in order to change the world, He needed to focus on sold-out disciples. He had to take these men through a shaping process that would leave them looking like Himself.

---

<sup>49</sup> MacArthur, *Study Bible*, 1402.

Because His intentions was to pour Himself into those who would take up their crosses and follow Him. His message worked. The world heard about God's saving grace because He developed fishers of men."<sup>50</sup>

The children of Israel had a promise that if they would walk in the ways of the Lord and do what was right in His sight, then God would not allow the dreaded diseases to come upon them that He had allowed to come upon their enemies. Fredrick Gaiser says in his book *Healing in the Bible* in (Exodus 15:26), God told Israel, "If you listen carefully to the Lord your God and do what is right in His eyes, if you pay attention to His commands and keep all of His decrees, I will not bring on you any of the diseases I brought on the Egyptians, for I am the Lord who heals you."<sup>51</sup>

Dr. Gaiser in his book, *Healing In the Bible*, states "the condition of keeping Yahweh's statutes and ordinances produces life while disregarding them leads to death is prevalent, especially in the so-called Levitical Holiness Code (Leviticus 17-26), Deuteronomy, and Ezekiel."<sup>52</sup> This is to say that if Israel is to do what is right in the sight of God that the Lord would bless them and not curse them. Recognizably, this is true also in the life of the writer and of other Christians who believe that health is also available and falls under the consequences of a relationship with God. Gaiser states that, "the point is not under rigorous legalism, do good and I will love you; but the observable truth, which is keeping God's commandments."<sup>53</sup>

---

<sup>50</sup> Putman, *Team Sport*, 93.

<sup>51</sup> Gaiser, *Healing Bible*, 23-24.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 118.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*



There is a list of things like alcoholism, unsafe sex, smoking, and drugs that can all be attributed to death. Israel's understanding of practicing God's law would give them life and health, but to choose not to obey them would certainly bring death. Fredrick Gaiser states in his book *Healing in the Bible* that "Israel does not become God's chosen people by observing the statutes, but because they are His beloved people."<sup>54</sup> God gives them the statutes in order that they might live eternally. When it comes to this type of doctrine, one referred to as Christology, this is the same as why God gives this world His only begotten son—Jesus Christ, who came by way of the Holy Spirit through His earthly mother Mary. Jesus who enjoyed fellowship of His Father and the Holy Spirit from the very beginning before time began. God gives to this world not the statutes for all to live by, but the teachings of Jesus Christ that if this world would accept Him as their Lord and Savior then the world through Him might live eternally. It is the same in which Israel was taught by God that if the world can have a relationship with God, then they would not live under a curse, but that their lives would be one of blessing. The Word of God was life-giving to Israel if they were to respond faithfully, and obediently. Fredrick Gaiser says in his book *Healing in the Bible*, "That they occur within the dialogical relationship of divine speech and human hearkening that promotes life and well-being. It does not seem to be true that Israel understanding of the human body and the development of science and medicine was limited when compared to that of Egypt and Mesopotamia."<sup>55</sup> Gaiser points out "that in Egypt with several important papyri testify to a very early and orderly pattern of

---

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 23.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 28.

treatment, including diagnosis, therapy, and prognosis.”<sup>56</sup> In Mesopotamia, medical documents, including parts of the human Code of Hammurabi, are even far more numerous than those from Egypt. Some of these contain a short description of a disease, a diagnosis, and a prescription of drugs and spells.”<sup>57</sup> Even in the Biblical translations it would appear that Israel’s knowledge of medical terms or issues were limited seeing how they trusted in God as their true and divine healer. Gaiser stated that, “The Egyptians practice of embalming the dead, which entailed removal of the internal organs; which they had some anatomical knowledge, however, Israel had no such knowledge.” Even though embalming was not rejected when done by Egyptians “physicians” in (Genesis 50:2-3, 26).<sup>58</sup> This was when Joseph summoned medical men from Egypt, who was fully capable of embalming, rather than religious embalmers in order to avoid the magic and mysticism associated with these practices. Gaiser states that “once normal embalming and mourning had been properly observed according to Egyptian custom, Joseph was free to seek permission to conduct a funeral in Canaan. Throughout the ancient world, medical knowledge and treatment were linked with the priesthood; also since Israel purity laws did not allow priests to have contact with human corpses, knowledge that may have been gained through early forms of autopsy was unavailable.”<sup>59</sup>

---

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 29.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 30.

Henri J. M. Nouwen in his book *The Wounded Healer* says:

In the middle of our convulsive world men and women raise their voices time and again to announce with incredible boldness that we are waiting for a Liberator. We are waiting, they announce, for a Messiah who will free us from hatred and oppression, from racism and war a Messiah who will let peace and justice take their rightful place. The Messiah, the story tells us, is sitting among the poor, binding his wounds only one at a time, always prepared for the moment when he might be needed. Jesus has given this story a new fullness by making His own broken body the way to health, to liberation and new life. Thus, like Jesus, those who proclaim liberation are called not only to care for their own wounds and the wounds of others, but also to make their wounds into a major source of healing power.<sup>60</sup>

The *MacArthur Study Bible* tells of Israel turning to God and the possibility of some type of medicine (Isaiah 38: 1-21). “In those days, Hezekiah was sick unto death. And Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz, came unto him and said unto him, Thus saith the Lord, Set thine house in order; for thou shalt die, and not live. Then Hezekiah turned his face toward the wall, and prayed unto the Lord.” This sickness that Hezekiah had must have been a terminal illness, because of the prophet Isaiah commands that he “set your house in order and that he would die and not live.”<sup>61</sup> Hezekiah reminded the Lord in prayer of his piety and devotion to God. He did not specifically ask to be healed in this process. However, there were two reasons why Hezekiah wept bitterly; the first one was because he thought that his death would give Sennacherib cause to boast. The second reason was because his son, Manasseh, was too young to become king. After Hezekiah prayed, the Word of the Lord came to the prophet Isaiah as he was in the

---

<sup>60</sup> Henri J. M. Nouwen, *The Wounded Healer In Our Own Woundedness, We Can Become a Source of Life for Others* (New York, NY: Crown Publishing, 1972), 88-89.

<sup>61</sup> MacArthur, *Study Bible*, 1011.

middle of the court. (Isaiah 38:4-5) says, “and the word of the Lord came to Isaiah saying Go and tell Hezekiah, Thus says the Lord, the God of David your father: I have heard your prayer, I have seen your tears; surely I will add to your days fifteen years.”<sup>62</sup> Here, the Lord’s immediate response granted the king’s request. However, though the request was immediate the prophet Isaiah told Hezekiah to take a lump of figs and lay them on his boils. According to medicine.net:

A boil is a localized infection in the skin that generally starts as a reddened tender area. Over time, the area becomes firm, hard, and tender. Eventually, the center of the boil softens and becomes filled with infection-fighting white blood cells from the bloodstream to eradicate the infection. This collection of white cells, bacteria, and proteins is known as pus. Finally, the pus forms a head, which can be surgically opened or spontaneously drain out through the surface of the skin. Pus enclosed within the tissue is referred to as abscess. A boil is also referred to as a “skin abscess.” There are also several different types of boils like furuncle or carbuncle that these are also abscess in the skin usually caused by the bacterium called *Staphylococcus aureus*. The term furuncle is used to refer to a typical boil that occurs within a hair follicle, and have one or more openings onto the skin and may be associated with fever or chills. The carbuncle can form a hardened lump that can be felt in the skin. The condition of having chronic, recurring boils is referred to as furunculosis or carbunculosis.<sup>63</sup>

The Bible is not clear on the type of boils that was on King Hezekiah, and the degree of his sickness. However, they must have been very terminal to the point that Isaiah would tell him to lay a lump of figs on the boils and then Hezekiah was healed. Then in the next verse (2 kings 20: 8) And Hezekiah said to Isaiah, “What is the sign

---

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 1010.

<sup>63</sup> *Boils (Skin Abscesses) Information, Causes*; available from <http://www.medicinenet.com/boils/article.htm>. assessed (Nov. 11, 2012).

that the Lord will heal me, and I shall go to the house of the Lord the third day?”<sup>64</sup> Even though this is the first time of biblically marking time, Hezekiah requested this sign to confirm the Lord’s promise of healing.

In the Old Testament most of the miracles of healing were the result of God reversing a plague or punishment, as in (Numbers 16:46-48) when the plague was stopped after Aaron made atonement for the people. The healing of natural disease was rare and was performed by the prophets. When the writer began to look at the cost of healing in Western cultures, he discovered that health is a mega-business which cost more than the average worker can afford. In the United States, many Americans go without health care, and hospitals are in health care for major profits. According to the Fayetteville Observer, “the ‘health reform’ for the present administration is looking like it has failed for the politicians. In the state of North Carolina, those who could not afford dental care were lining up to receive free service in August 2011 from one of the 150 dental specialists on duty. Many in this state, as well as in other states, have said that the health care reform bill has made no inroads toward helping the American people.”<sup>65</sup>

---

<sup>64</sup> MacArthur, *Study Bible*, 553.

<sup>65</sup> FayObserver, *Estimated 1000 Expected to Benefit From Free Dental Care*; available from <http://www.fayobserver.com/articles/2012/04/27/1172615>; assessed (April 27, 2012).

However, Fredrick Gaiser states in *Healing in the Bible* “that the cost of good health care are real physicians, nurses, technicians, researchers, pharmaceutical chemists, aides, ambulance drivers, and administrators are at least worthy of their hire as preachers (Luke 10:7).<sup>66</sup>

In (1Kings 17:17-24) Elijah revives the son of the widow of Zarephath and in 1 Kings 5:8-14 Elisha cures Naaman of leprosy. Fredrick Gaiser in *Healing of the Bible* says “this story is one that raises issues and provides tension and interest in this rich narrative. This story finds one who was a commander of the Army of Aram. Naaman’s wife, who had a slave girl who knew about the man of God that was in Israel, knew that if only her master would go to Israel and seek the man of God that he might be healed. This slave girl’s had a strong determination to help her master deal with his sickness (leprosy). One might have thought that because she was a slave she could have cared less about her master. However, even in another land this slave girl was reaching for one who needed healing. He stated that “the biblical world took slavery for granted, but it was possible even then to treat slaves well or poorly”.<sup>67</sup> The writer observed how in the *MacArthur Study Bible* in (2 Kings 5:4-7), where Naaman went in and told his master saying, “Thus and thus said the girl who is from the land of Israel.” Then the king of Syria said, “Go now and I will send a letter to the king of Israel,” so he departed and took with him ten talents of silver, six thousand shekels of gold, and ten changes of clothing. Then he brought the letter to the king of Israel which said; “Now be advised, when this letter comes to you, that I have sent Naaman my servant to you, that you

---

<sup>66</sup> Gaiser, *Healing Bible*, 28.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 64.

might heal him of his leprosy.” Then it happened, when the king of Israel read the letter, that he tore his clothes and said, “Am I God, to kill and make alive that this man sends a man to me to heal him of his leprosy?”<sup>68</sup> This story reveals insight to the young the slave girl knows what the commander does not know—that there is a healer in Israel.

Henri J. M. Nouwen in his book *The Wounded Healer* writes,

We live in a society in which loneliness has become one of the most painful human wounds. The growing competition and rivalry that pervade our lives from birth have created in us an acute awareness of our isolation. This awareness has in turn left many with heightened anxiety and an intense search for the experience of unity and community. It has also led people to ask anew how love, friendship, brotherhood and sisterhood can free us from isolation and offer us a sense of intimacy and belonging.<sup>69</sup>

One would have to look at Naaman as a commander who was supreme commander of the army of Syria yet isolated in his own sickness. The word “commander” conveys that he was a high ranking official or officer. He was a great man, a man of social standing and prominence. He was an honorable man in the eyes of his master a highly regarded man who had won many victories. This is why the king of Syria was so willingly ready to send a letter to the king of Israel. Here, the reader of this story has the slave girl and the king of Israel, who means well. The reader is left to believe that Naaman is the good guy in the story.<sup>70</sup> Gaiser writes, “The story has

---

<sup>68</sup> MacArthur, *Study Bible*, 523.

<sup>69</sup> Nouwen, *Wounded Healer*, 89.

<sup>70</sup> Gaiser, *Healing Bible*, 65.

something of an Upstairs, Downstairs theme.”<sup>71</sup> The kings and the commander assume that things that matter happen at the proper levels of power with proper ceremony. Gaiser further says that, “The servants know differently and that God works through ordinary people and ordinary means, even ordinary rivers, nowhere near as grand as Damascus.

There could have been conflict within Naaman because of his sickness and wanting to be healed. Sy, Barbara and Daryl Landau assert in their book *From Conflict to Creativity*, “When we are faced with conflict, most of us like our forebears either confront our opponent aggressively in order to win or withdraw from the situation. For most of us these are not strategic decisions; our choice depends, in large part, on our personal comfort level with conflict. Some people are uneasy with conflict and withdraw from it; others thrive on conflict and seek it out.”<sup>72</sup>

Naaman will have to humble himself and accept this theological worldview if he is to find healing. In the eyes of Naaman, he knew that the cost of healing would be expensive. That is why he took to Israel with him, ten talents of silver, six thousand shekels of gold, and ten sets of garments. In Naaman’s eyes, he is looking at the cost of a healing and to have it by any means necessary to restore his health. After his arrival in Israel and showing up at the prophets’ door with his entire entourage and all of his wealth, Gaiser calls it the power elite of the world. This is, as Fredrick Gaiser says in his book *Healing in the Bible*, “The power elite of the world come to call on the rural

---

<sup>71</sup> Upstairs, Downstairs was a British television series (1971-1975) that contrasted the lives of two groups in the same house: the wealthy owners and the humbler servants – a theme revisited in 2001 movie Gosford Park. Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> Landau, *From Conflict*, 4.



nobodies because they need what the nobodies have to offer, and they are willing to pay.<sup>73</sup> With the expectation of Naaman coming to see the Man of God and the prophet does not even come out to see him. It was because of his personal greatness with his huge gifts that he had brought in, and his diplomatic letter from the king Naaman expected personal attention to his need.

Michael Gemignani in his book *Making Your Church a House of Healing* writes, “Indeed, to many, the idea of maintaining control of their existence without having to yield control to God may seem attractive. Yet we are finite creatures, so no matter what pleasures we may gain from satisfying our every personal desire will eventually lead to disillusionment and pain. It is only in knowing the truth that true freedom is found.”<sup>74</sup>

However, Gaiser states in his book *Healing in the Bible*; Elisha did not even go out to meet this great man of honor and prestige but sent his servant to meet him instead with instruction for a healing through the messenger. Naaman became very angry because he anticipated a personal cleansing ceremony from the prophet himself. It appeared that Naaman was looking for something magical to happen before his very eyes he said; “I thought that for me he would surely come out, and stand and call on the name of the Lord his God, and would wave his hand over the spot, and cure the leprosy” (2 Kings 5:11)!<sup>75</sup>

---

<sup>73</sup> Gaiser, *Healing Bible*, 65.

<sup>74</sup> Gemignani. *House of Healing*, 113.

<sup>75</sup> Gaiser, *Healing Bible*, 66.

Fredrick Gaiser states in his book *Healing in the Bible* “that Naaman is the quack’s dream come true, he is wealthy and he wants a show. His illness and his worldview make him profoundly vulnerable. He wants to be manipulated. He wants to part with his money, because what he seeks is of such great value. Charlatans everywhere will take advantage of this vulnerability of the ill, but not Elisha; just heed God’s Word and wash. Sure in Naaman’s eyes he thought that the Abanah and the Pharpar rivers was far superior, the Abanah River began in the Lebanon Mountains and flowed to Damascus, it’s clear water producing orchards and gardens.”<sup>76</sup>

The Pharpar River flowed east of Mt. Hermon to the South of Damascus. If Naaman, so he thought needed to wash in a river, those two rivers were superior to the muddy Jordan. However, it was obedience to God’s Word that was the issue, not the quality of the water. In 2 Kings 5:13, Naaman’s servant used the title “father,” which was not usually employed by servants to their master. The use of the term here may indicate something of the warmth that the servants felt for Naaman. His servant pointed out to Naaman that he had been willing to do anything, no matter how hard, to be cured. He should be even more willing, therefore to do something as easy as washing in a muddy river. The commander of the army Naaman came to Israel looking to be cured from his leprosy, but instead found something in the wholeness of his personhood. Just by being obedient to God’s word at the promptness of his servant, he became healed in two ways. First, on the surface once he had washed in the Jordan River. He became healed as the Man of God had sent instructions for a healing.

---

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

Secondly, now he was healed by his personhood because in (2 Kings 5:15) there was a conversion.<sup>77</sup> “Then he returned to the man of God, he and all his aides, and come and stood before him; and he said, “Indeed, now I know that there is no God in all the earth, except in Israel; now therefore, please take a gift from your servant.” Fredrick Gaiser in his book *Healing in the Bible* says; “He came with a skin problem, but the healing he received was more than skin deep. It affected his whole person; it will affect his theology and his work and his whole world.”<sup>78</sup> God’s healing is like that. It is not a commodity to be purchased or received, but rather a transformation to be experienced. Naaman is made new.” As with those that have been washed in the blood of the Lamb, and has been made a new, there is not only a transformation on the surface, but a transformation on the inside. Healing can take place on the inside of a person before it is ever transformed on the outside.

There must never be a cost for divine healing God’s healings is absolutely free and without a charge. Naaman came to the man of God with gifts but Elisha was careful not to put a price on healing. The world must not confuse people on divine grace. Paul Enns in his book *The Moody Handbook of Theology* writes “The gift of healing involved the ability of a person to cure other persons of all forms of sickness.”<sup>79</sup> As in the case of Elisha and Naaman, however the gift of healing terminated with the completion of the cannon scriptures; there was no further need for the gift of healing.

---

<sup>77</sup> MacArthur, *Study Bible*, 1037.

<sup>78</sup> Gaiser, *Healing Bible*, 67.

<sup>79</sup> Enns, *Moody Handbook*, 272.

Paul Enns writes “God may still respond to the prayers of His children and heal a person of illness; this however, without the agency of another person. God may heal that person directly.”<sup>80</sup>

### **Theological Foundation**

Conflict resolution and parishioner healing are as much needed today as it has ever been. The church must strive to be all that God has called it to be in this postmodern generation. The writer will show through this progressive ministry model that God can heal within through the empowering act of the Holy Spirit. Church leaders are called to be more like Christ whether male or female in this present day. In his book *The Substance of Things Hope For* Samuel Dewitt Proctor stated “even though there were many ministers who were improperly trained, unbridled egotism, and exploited women he recalling the role of minister as a social advocate had always gripped his imagination.”<sup>81</sup>

Sy, Barbara and Daryl Landau in their book *From Conflict to Creativity* writes, “Conflict has been around for so long and is so prevalent today, you might expect that we would accept its presence and be good at resolving it. However, most of us are not comfortable with conflict, and we do not have a broad range of strategies and skills for dealing with it. We have inherited from our ancestors a fight-or-flight approach to conflict.”<sup>82</sup>

---

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., 273.

<sup>81</sup> Samuel DeWitt Proctor, *The Substance of Things Hope For, A Memoir of African-American Faith* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press), 1995. 37.

<sup>82</sup> Landau. *From Conflict*, 4.

There are countless examples in the bible which support the theological viewpoint that God resolves conflict and heals those who are in conflict. One example of this is found in the story of Hannah. The theology of God is so powerful in this particular story because God resolved the conflict concerning Hannah by healing her from infertility. God healed Hannah, not just for her good, but in order to save His people. From a theological point of view, God has a special and unique claim on his people because of the creative power of who God is. According to the *MacArthur Study Bible* (Hebrews 4:13), “and there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things, are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.”<sup>83</sup>

In this post-modern generation, as it was in the first century, when men forgot or rejected God as Creator, they failed in the most basic moral obligation they had to God. For the Lord has redeemed us, not only did Israel have obligation to God as their Creator, but also as their redeemer. In his book, *Congregational Leadership in Anxious Times*, Peter Steinke writes, “How life in the Christian community is rifled with differences and the fact that conflict is seldom far from us. Although conflicting views, stances and opinions are given, he says chaos and crisis need not follow. Whether conflicting approaches to mission or ministry lead to creativity or polarized standoffs it is a matter how leaders are able to respond to the situation.”<sup>84</sup> In this progressive ministry model of conflict resolution and parishioner healing the theological foundations for this project can begin with the story of the prophecy of Jesus as told by

---

<sup>83</sup> MacArthur. *Study Bible*, 1903.

<sup>84</sup> Steinke, *Congregational Leadership*, 25.

Isaiah the prophet in Isaiah 53. This deals with Christ's first advent into the world how God interrupted history to send His Son into the world.

Who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, And as a root out of dry ground. He has no form or comeliness; and when we see Him, There is no beauty that we should desire Him. He is despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were our faces from Him. He was despised, and we did not esteem Him. Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed Him stricken, Smitten by God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed. All we are like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, everyone his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so He opened not His mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment, and who will declare His generation? For He was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of My people He was stricken. And they made His grave with the wicked but with rich at His death; Because He had done no violence, nor was any deceit in His mouth. Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise Him; He has put Him to grief. When You make His soul an offering for sin; He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand. He shall see the labor of His soul, and be satisfied. By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify many; For He shall bear their iniquities. Therefore I will divide Him a portion with the great, and He shall divide the spoil with the strong, because He poured out His soul unto death, and He was numbered with the transgressors, and He bore the sin of many and made intercession for the transgressors.<sup>85</sup>

---

<sup>85</sup> MacArthur, *Study Bible*, 1037-1038.

In this passage “Who has believed our report?” The question here is implied that in spite of the other prophecies, only a few would recognize the servant when He appeared. Though Israel did not welcome Him at the first advent, they failed also to recognize the mighty, incarnate power of God in the person of Jesus, their deliverer.

Though unrecognized by the world Jesus was observed carefully by God, who ordered every minute circumstance of His life. The question is will the world still recognize who Christ is from the theological point of trusting in a crucified Christ? Many would want to have a bloodless gospel instead of a crucified Christ and a risen Savior. The problem the world will have with Christ is that they would want a show as with the case of Naaman when he came to the king of Israel and the man of God (Elisha). Naaman wanted to know why Elisha would not come out to him and wave his hand over him and that he would be healed of his leprosy. However, once Naaman was obedient and did what was required of him to go wash in the Jordan River then his theology change. He knew that the only place there was a God was in Israel therefore asked a request of Elisha. Elisha asked if he could take some of the dirt from Israel back to his homeland. Naaman concerned that there is no other God, but the God of Israel. He also knew that when his master would bow down to Rhimmon their god in his homeland that he would not bow down.

The world wants to see something happen before they believe in the Christ rather than have faith and why should there be any difference now than before? Even when Christ was on the scene physically, over 2000 years ago the world still did not except Him the way He came, therefore did not believe that He was the Messiah. Even more now than ever before people are still in need of a healing just for the mere fact that

there are more people in the world now than it was doing Christ time on earth. Fredrick J. Gaiser makes a valid theological point in his book, *Healing in the Bible*. He writes “What does wellness looks like for those who live under the sign of the cross?”<sup>86</sup> The question that the writer of this paper would be “what does healing look like now in the twenty-first century rather than the first century for those who live under the sign of the cross?” There is no difference then than now even if there is a 2000 year gap and technology has increased for the ground is still level at the cross. The difficulty that one would have, in believing that Christ came into this world and laid down His life, who would oppose that of Christ. Could they not see those who would be dying with syphilis, and HIV/AIDS, and cancer in this country and in the many countries of South Africa by the millions? The writer believes that Christ knew what world did not know “that there is a balm in Gilead.” If there were no Christ then there would be no healing for this post-modern generation. Fredrick Gaiser says in, *Healing in the Bible*, “Even at the throne room of God, the victorious Lamb, the Lamb worthy to receive power and wealth and wisdom and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing,” is forever the Lamb once slain.” The cross is forever part of Jesus and therefore forever part of God, so it must be forever part of what it means to be a human being conformed to the image of God’s Son, and precisely a whole and complete human being.<sup>87</sup>

In view of what the Bible says about how Jesus was wounded for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities; and upon Him being punished that made us

---

<sup>86</sup> Gaiser, *Healing Bible*, 227.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid, 233.



whole, and by his bruises we are healed. We cannot escape the realism of the suffering servant and being made whole in the process. It is interesting how Matthew's gospel connects with the prophecy of Isaiah with the healing ministry of Jesus. Jesus is found going into the house of Simon Peter there his mother-in-law lay sick of a fever. Jesus touches her and the fever leaves her then she arose to serve them. That evening many were brought to Jesus in need of a healing some sick others possessed of demons, but all were healed. We are not told how many of these illnesses that were brought to Him that were life threatening only that of what infirmities they might have had. It is said by Jurgen Moltmann, "that Jesus healing power is not to be found in His lordship over sickness. His power to heal is the power of His suffering."<sup>88</sup> He heals us by carrying our sickness and through His wounds we are healed (Isaiah 53:5). It is in the Book of Isaiah, how one would interrupt this text, and ask the question does it have anything to do with "healing under the sign of the cross?" Clearly the correlation between Isaiah and Matthew's gospel deals with the atonement theology, yet Isaiah views Jesus as a suffering servant. Fredrick Gaiser makes a strong point in his book *Healing in the Bible*, he says, "There is no need to belittle Jesus therapies, his curing of everyday illness by the power of God that resides in Him. Still Matthew does bring in Isaiah's reference to Jesus bearing disease."<sup>89</sup> However; the writer sees that it was only the suffering of Christ and the atonement of His death that the many are able to be healed. When Christ came into the world He came for one purpose that was to redeem man back to God.

---

<sup>88</sup> Jurgen Moltmann, *The source of Life The Holy Spirit and the Theology of Life*, (Minneapolis; MN: Augsburg Fortress, 1997), 64-65.

<sup>89</sup> Gaiser, *Healing Bible*, 178.

Gaiser says of Dietrich Bonhoeffer in his famous, “Only the Suffering Can Help.” Bonhoeffer letter of July 16, 1944, wrote, “Matthew 8:17 makes it quite clear that Christ helps us, not by virtue of His omnipotence, but by virtue of His weakness and suffering.”<sup>90</sup>

The constitution of the World Health Organization defines health as, a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. The enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health is one of the fundamental rights of every human being without distinction of race, religion, political belief, economics or social condition. The health of all peoples is fundamental to the attainment of peace and security and is dependent upon the fullest co-operation of individuals and States.<sup>91</sup> To some, this definition given by the World Health Organization is not feasible. However, in light of the current healthcare situation, one may need the bible for an eschatological perspective.

The Gospels do not offer something wholly new with their presentation of God’s working through weakness as some would presume. The notion occurs often in the Old Testament as well, and especially in the second part of Isaiah. It is there where the Servant Songs are found. These songs emphasize the suffering of the servant on behalf

---

<sup>90</sup> Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Letters and Papers from prison*, enlarged ed., ed. Eberhard Bethge (New York, NY: Macmillan, 1971), 360-61.

<sup>91</sup> Gaiser, *Healing Bible*, 226.

of others.<sup>92</sup> When observing Isaiah 53:10 one could say that it pleased the Lord to crush the Suffering Servant with pain.<sup>93</sup> As Fredrick Gaiser stated in his book *Healing in the Bible*:

From the outside looking in at The Book of Isaiah that is in God's house, in order to fit in we must play masochist to God's sadism. There poses a problem hermeneutically when one would interpret the bible that way, because after careful reading of Isaiah it would suggest that is not what God had in mind. What does it mean in the Book of Isaiah when the word "crushed" is mentioned? The Hebrew word for God's "will" to crush the servant plays an important role in the latter part of the book of Isaiah: "hapes" meaning "will, desire, purpose, pleasure, plan." If it is God's "will" to crush the servant that is only because Israel is God's "delight," and because God's "purpose" is to rebuild Jerusalem. That is the "purpose" that will not return void.<sup>94</sup>

The problem that many postmodern churches experience revolves around the question of whether healing even exists. There are people who attend church and who have been broken, hurt, and scared by life's situations. These people go to church but leave the same way, unchanged. Their conditions remain the same, and they stay there even though they expect no change. As it was with Naaman in (2 Kings 5:1-19) members of churches want to see a miracle. In order to believe God can heal, members stay away from the church when they feel that God cannot do anything about their situation. As a result, other congregants see their absent, which leads them to believe that maybe God is absent from their church or community. These kinds of situations could cause stressful times in the church congregation because of their way of thinking.

---

<sup>92</sup> Gaiser, *Healing Bible*, 230.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, 231.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*

Ministers and lay-leaders are challenged with the difficult task of persuading parishioners to trust in God alone for their healing. The God of Israel yesterday is the same God present today.

Isaiah 43 deals with the theme of courage. “Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name; you are Mine.” (Isaiah 43:1) God is the same today as yesterday; God still speaks to His people as their Creator. God has a special and unique claim on creation because He is the Creator.

As it is with this post-modern generation, as it was in the First Century, when men rejected God as Creator, they failed in the most basic obligation they have to God. When God says: “For I have redeemed you,” not only did Israel have an obligation to God as their Creator, but also as their Redeemer. He is the one who brought them out of literal exile and spiritual slavery. The redeemer brought an unfortunate relative out of their slavery and debt. This passage shows how God rescued Israel, and paid the slave debt they could not pay. When God calls Himself our Redeemer, He looks ahead to the price that must be paid for our salvation. God twice owns His people. He has the right of ownership both as Creator and Redeemer. His ownership is personal, because He says, “I have called you by your name.” His ownership is certain, because He seals it by saying, “You are mine.”

In the theology of Hannah in (2 Samuel 1:1-2:10), many would seek in vain for a major section as God as a healer. It is that the writer has found in this section a rediscovery of Old Testament theology even in the twentieth century, how it is focused on the mighty acts of God in Israel. Fredrick Gaiser quoting Claus Westermann, was writing on creation and describing the “blessing” work of God alongside God’s

“saving” work. “Saving,” for Westermann, referred primarily to actions that occurred only once, while “blessings” referred to God’s continuing action in the world.

Westermann placed healing, along with all aspects of the daily flow of life, primarily in the realm of blessing.<sup>95</sup> The aspect of saving one for all time is accomplished through almighty God, as He did with Israel. Israel never again crossed back over to the other side to live in Egypt. Immediately after the deliverance from Egypt, God announced to Israel, “I am Yahweh, your healer” (Exodus 15:26). Once they were saved from the bondage of the Egyptians, the Israelites were saved for all time—never to return to that lifestyle again.

Hannah lived a life of one who suffered internally. The fact that she wanted to have children and could not brought on great distress upon her in reviewing the story of Hannah as a narrated lament it helps us understand the flow of its theological expectations. Hannah is in isolation, alienated from herself, her family, God, and the community and worship. This story hits home when you recognize the pain, suffering and illness that isolates people. This can be the same as one look at Jesus in His final hours before the death on the cross. Scripture says in (Habakkuk 1:13) that God is too pure to look upon evil.<sup>96</sup> Therefore, it is possible that when Jesus bore the sins of the world His body on the cross that the Father, spiritually turned away. At the same time, the Son may have cried out, “My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?” Hannah had been shunned by the community; she had been provoked by Peninnah because of her bareness. Even her husband thought it was all about him when he asked Hannah,

---

<sup>95</sup> Gaiser, *Healing Bible*, 102-103.

<sup>96</sup> MacArthur, *Study Bible*, 1319.

“Am I not more than ten sons?” Her days were filled with desperately seeking to hide, while her nights were filled with tears. Fredrick Gaiser In *Healing in the Bible* writes, “We might wonder why she waited for this festive occasion to pray. A pious Israelite could, of course, have prayed at anytime, and Hannah had no doubt done so.” Now she is at Shiloh.

The primary Israelite sanctuary during this early period, Israel understood God to be particularly and deliberately present in the sanctuary or temple, so the opportunity to pray there offered special promise.”<sup>97</sup> This thought occurs as one looks at *Biblical Theology* by Leo G. Perdue, and *Introducing the Conversation* Robert Morgan and Benjamin D. Sommer. In *Introducing the Conversation*, the authors discuss philosophical theology and natural theology. “Many modern scholars like Karl Barth and Krister Stendahl have argued that biblical thought contrast with modern philosophical approaches, including natural reason. This view contends that revelation through biblical researchers and their texts contrast with understandings of God and the scared that may derive from human reason and the understanding of the world.”<sup>98</sup> It could very well be the same for any members of a congregation, if they have a desire to find a church or temple to pour their hearts out in prayers for the healing of their soul, if

---

<sup>97</sup> Gaiser, *Healing Bible*, 106.

<sup>98</sup> Leo G. Perdue, Leo G. Perdue, Robert Morgan, Benjamin D. Sommer, *Biblical Theology: Introducing the Conversation*, (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2009), 58.

it is only for the mere psychological, or the effect of the divine presence of the almighty. Gaiser states that, “In the Old Testament, God promises to be present in the temple of Jerusalem (Psalm 132:11-18).”<sup>99</sup>

Even before Jerusalem an earlier sense of such promises was no doubt understood to apply to Shiloh as well encouraging Hannah’s prayer. As one look at Hannah’s prayer, it moves the reader from one that is in distress, to where she would most likely lose her appetite—where she wept bitterly before the Lord. The condition of her body is not told described in the Bible, nor does the reader understand why she was barren. All that is left to understand in biblical terms is that the Lord closed up her womb (1Samuel 1:6). There are no modern doctors to diagnose her case and tell us what was going on with her. All that is known is that her husband would go up year after year from his town to worship to sacrifice unto the Lord, and would give portions to his wife Peninnah and to all of her sons. But to Hannah he gave a double portion because he loved her and the Lord closed her womb.<sup>100</sup>

After Hannah’s vow unto the Lord that she would dedicate her son to God, she continued in prayer before the Lord. This became evident that Hannah believed in the petition that she sat before the Lord, and gave credence to her faith that she would be healed, and that God would hear her prayer. Hannah demonstrates her piety by promising that her child will be a lifelong Nazirite.

One would argue in the case of Hannah whether God is a God of fertility or the God of healing. Fredrick Gaiser in his book *Healing in the Bible* makes a comment on

---

<sup>99</sup> Gaiser, *Healing Bible*, 107.

<sup>100</sup> MacArthur, *Study Bible*, 377.

this issue: “Alongside the issue of relation between the saving and the healing work of God, the relation between the public of political and the familial or personal work of God has been taken up in recent discussion of Old Testament theology. Rainer Albetz has argued that the individual laments have their original life setting primarily in the small family group rather than in the temple worship of the ‘great congregation.’ They deal with personal issues such as birth and death, sickness and healing, fertility and providence.”<sup>101</sup> Erhard Gerstenberger has shown that these are issues related to the internal life of the extended family or clan rather than political life of the tribe and nation. Fredrick Gaiser points out that, Gerstenberger comments are relevant to our work. “Although the great political issues, such as exodus and exile, come to dominate the official theology of the Old Testament; they do not and dare not supplant the personal and familial issues, such as healing and fertility.”<sup>102</sup> The God of the mighty creedal acts never ceases to be the God of familial and personal care, of blessings and fertility, even if characters in the Bible sometimes struggle to remember or understand (Hosea 2:8)”<sup>103</sup>

Gaiser makes an interesting statement about Hannah in *Healing in the Bible*. He states “It was not Hannah’s distress or concerns that brought her and her family to Shiloh. However, in viewing the story of Hannah, it helps one to understand its flow and its theological expectations. It also helps one to understand healing within the

---

<sup>101</sup> Rainer Albetz, *A History of Israel’s Religion in the Old Testament Period* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1994), 100-101.

<sup>102</sup> Gaiser, *Healing Bible*, 109.

<sup>103</sup> Erhard Gerstenberger, *Yahweh the Patriarch: Ancient Images of God and Feminist Theology*, trans. Fredrick Gaiser (Minneapolis, MI: Fortress, 1996), esp. 52-54.



narrative of the story and describe the theological framework and religious life of ancient Israel. After investigating the story, one could assume that God is very active in the history of Israel, and is thriving as the God of the Israelites.”<sup>104</sup> The writer, as well as others, could assume that Samuel would grow up and be very instrumental in the history of Israel. God overcomes the infertility that blocks the way of future events that transpire in the history of Israel. Also, that the God of Israel uses this opportunity not only to have a prophet that will be very instrumental in Israel history, but to heal a woman of her bareness. This in itself shows the relation between God working on a public level and a personal level. In view of the public, God is still working in the midst of Israel history. On a personal level, God works with individuals whose lives have been broken. Even in the life of Hannah one can see the exploitation of Hannah though her husband loves her. It is without a doubt that there is trouble on the horizon as the problem and the tension unfold in the story. “Peninnah had children, but Hannah had no children.” Despite all of Hannah’s piety, her distress is real. In ancient times, the barrenness of a woman brought on deep pain within her and disappointment to those who desired children. To a woman, life had no meaning without children. Even in this narrative, when Hannah is able to go to the priest and talk she goes to pray to God, and while she is praying, the priest assumes she is intoxicated because her mouth is moving but no words are coming forth. He assumes that she is intoxicated? However, this text shows the piety of Hannah pouring out from her. Hannah was a righteous woman who suffered unjustly.

---

<sup>104</sup> Gaiser, *Healing Bible*, 108-09.

There are African American women and women in other ethnicities who fill that they have been marginalized just as women were in the Bible. African American women identify with women who are exploited and victimized in Biblical narratives. Can this be seen in the African American church of today? Women have even been victimized and exploited even in the preaching arena! The struggle against slavery, colonialism, and racism has shaped a different hermeneutic than that offered by most theologians who work with the Bible and contemporary faith. Renita J. Weems gives a most compelling look into arena of women in the Bible. In her book *Just a Sister Away; Understanding the Timeless Connection Between Women of Today and Women in the Bible* she writes “Sari and Hagar differences today would manifest themselves between an African woman and a Hebrew woman a woman of color and a white woman. A third world woman and a first World woman, this is story of ethnic prejudice exacerbated by economic and sexual exploitation. Theirs are a story of conflict, women betraying women, mothers conspiring against mothers. Theirs is a story of social rivalry.”<sup>105</sup> In the example of Hagar in the Bible the Egyptian concubine of Abraham, is seen as reflecting the experiences of African American women who were slaves even after the Emancipation Proclamation have continued to be marginalized not only by white society but even in a patriarchal black church.<sup>106</sup> Hagar, a handmaiden of Abraham, was mistreated by Abraham’s barren wife, Sarah. As a result, Hager takes her child flees into the wilderness. They survive in the wilderness because of the compassion and

---

<sup>105</sup> Renita J. Weems, *Just a Sister Away; Understanding the Timeless Connection Between Women of Today and Women of The Bible* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press), 2004. 2.

<sup>106</sup> MacArthur, *Study Bible*, 37.

oversight of God. She even receives the promise that her son will be the founder of a great nation. African American women also long with hopeful anticipation for salvation from the violent and uncaring church. The God and the Savior who speak of the redemption and release of the destitute, the maligned, the exploited, and the victimized, include particular women and offers hope in a world filled with shameful exploitations.

In her book, *Battered Love*, Renita Weems presents important narrative work and literary criticism from a womanist perspective. She applies a metaphorical literary analysis and theology to her study of the Prophets, primarily and also Jeremiah and Ezekiel. Most convincingly, she shreds the superficial veneer of scholars' attempts to justify the actions of these abusive males and their mistreatment of woman. She especially reveals the lurid fascination of these prophets with women's bodies and the dishonor done to shame them by the "men of God."<sup>107</sup> As a womanist scholar, Weems recognizes that interpretations take shape within the framework of power that dispels the notion of innocent readings of the biblical text. In her "essay" "Reading Her Way through the Struggle: African American Woman and the Bible;" Weems says that there is an ongoing challenge for scholars committed to liberation perspective on the Bible in explaining how and why modern readers from marginalized communities continue to regard the Bible as a meaningful resource for shaping modern existence. Weems shows how history has impacted African American women's reading in general, and their reading of the Bible in particular, given way that the written text has been presented to

---

<sup>107</sup> Felder, Cain Hope Ed; *Stony the Road We Trod; African American Biblical Interpretation* Renita Weems Essay; "Reading Her Way Through the Struggle: African American Woman and the Bible," (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), 57-77.

them as “authoritative.”<sup>108</sup> Weems states, “that the Bible has not been presented to the African American woman as one of a number of books available to her to read or not read as she pleases. For the African American (Protestant) woman, the Bible has been the only book passed down from her ancestors, and it has been presented to her as the medium for experiencing and knowing the will of the Christian God.”<sup>109</sup> Its role, in some sense, that one believes, is that for the marginalized readers, especially those who read the Bible in order to get some idea of who they are in the presence of God or who they are in relation to other people is even more complicated and problematic. Weems believes the Bible has been able to capture the imagination of African American women, and that it has been and continues to be able to do so because significant portions speak to the deepest aspirations of oppressed people for freedom, dignity, justice, and vindication. Substantial portions of the Bible describe a world where the oppressed are liberated, the last become the first, the humbled are exalted, the despised are preferred, those rejected are welcomed, the long suffering are rewarded, the dispossessed are repossessed, and the arrogant are prostrated. These passages, she says, are for oppressed readers who stand in the center of the biblical message and thereby, serve as a vital norm for biblical faith.<sup>110</sup>

The writer of this paper cannot deny what is truth or error on any part of history, concerning the Bible or the Scio-political norms of today. Or can he object or refute what he might feel about the hierarchical social norms of the times, even in the times of

---

<sup>108</sup> Ibid, 57-77.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid., 78.

Biblical history. The only thing that the researcher of this paper can say that whether male or female, black or white, Jew or Gentile and slave or free, that we are all powerless without Jesus. Jesus makes room for the healing process; because once the world has accepted Him as Savior then the revelation God becomes real in the life of the believer. Then when the revelation of God becomes real then there will be the real passion to do great kingdom work for God. The researcher of this paper believes that God wants every human being to fulfill their divine destiny in Him, but that cannot be accomplished if one does not come into the revelation of knowing Jesus Christ. With Him there can be no reconciliation or complete healing from within. The Bible speaks of Christ coming back for His bride the church. In this parable in (Matthew 25:6); “And at midnight a cry was heard; Behold, the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet Him;”<sup>111</sup> This parable shows the importance of being prepared and ready when Jesus returns. Even if His delay is longer than expected, when He returns there will be no second chances for the unprepared.

The ones in the church today as lay leader and ministers of the gospel have a job to do. They are to make sure that they are seeking first the kingdom of God and all of His righteousness. Then, they are to make sure their minds and hearts are on Jesus. The church, in this current and next generation must be ready to meet the needs of the parishioners and the surrounding communities. The responsibility rests not only on the parishioners but on the leaders of the church. Leaders must set forth an atmosphere, which ushers in the Holy Spirit.

---

<sup>111</sup> MacArthur, *Study Bible*, 1441.

In his book, *Making Your Church a House of Healing*, Michael Gemignani writes, “A common cliché is the church is a hospital for sinners. Statements often become clichés because people recognize they concisely express a truth, and such is the case with the statements. The church should be a hospital for sinners, a house of healing for our spiritual diseases, a place where we not only receive forgiveness for our sins.”<sup>112</sup>

In his book, *Faith Seeking Understanding*, Daniel Migliore writes, In an often-quoted passage, Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote “The Bible directs us to God’s powerlessness and suffering; only the suffering God can help.” When turned into a slogan that is thoughtlessly repeated, the profound meaning of this statement is obscured. Only a suffering God can help us, but the suffering God is the triune God whose holy, self-giving, victorious love is at work from the creation of the world to its completion.<sup>113</sup>

Though many in the world suffer from their own church hurt because of lack of resolving conflict and not forgiving one another this might not be the best way for total wellness. Forgiving one another might have come hard for others because of growing up hearing so many sermons about forgiving. However, Stephen Mansfield in his book *Healing Your Church Hurt* gives five steps to help recover from church hurt:

---

<sup>112</sup> Gemignani, *House of Healing*, 73.

<sup>113</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Letters and Papers from Prison* (New York: Macmillan, 1972), 362 Daniel Migliore, *Faith Seeking Understanding*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2004), 132

1. Realize that you are not alone in your experience of being wounded in church.
2. Realize that all have been wounded this helps to look at your own church hurt in a different light.
3. Escape the trap of bitterness and damage done in your life this will help with forgiveness.
4. Survey your experience find out about who you are and about what your soul reached for in your season of crisis.
5. Learn about how to be whole and do interior work that will be essential for true life in the days ahead.

He says “in a sense we all have had our Emmaus Road experience hearing Jesus words, inviting Him in, welcoming His power to change us and then seeing Him as we have not seen Him before.”<sup>114</sup>

Sy, Barbara and Daryl Landau in their book *From Conflict to Creativity* write,

We need creativity to resolve interpersonal conflict. We need conflict the contention of ideas to generate creativity. It is no good avoiding or suppressing conflict for the sake of harmony; but neither is it wise to encourage people to give a free rein to their emotions and just go at it. It is too easy for the competition of ideas to turn into the competition of people. A collaborative process and set of conflict management skills can ensure that positive conflict does not become personalized.<sup>115</sup>

Fredrick Gaiser in his book *Healing in the Bible* states “Despite the realities of between sin and evil, creation remains ‘good,’ and the human is ‘wonderfully made’ (Psalm 139:14), which means that God the Creator graciously and continually works to

---

<sup>114</sup> Mansfield, *Church Hurt*, 144.

<sup>115</sup> Landau, *From Conflict*, 162.

heal all humans and all creation through the channels of creation itself, including the human body's own self healing properties and healing accomplished through human talents, creativity, and imagination.”<sup>116</sup> Gaiser continues to say “The Christian life promises joy and salvation, but it includes also the call to bear the cross to suffer for the sake of the other (Mark 15:31-32). As a Christian is not to be untouched by pain and suffering, but rather to participate in Christ's own ‘greater love’ (John 15:13) giving ourselves for others and sharing in response to Christ, who bore the suffering and the diseases of all (Matt. 8:17). Although Christian's definitions of health will share dimensions of other responsible human definitions, they will also include unique dimensions that may surprise and offend the world. Healing in Christ is ultimately cruciform.”<sup>117</sup>

---

<sup>116</sup> Gaiser, *Healing Bible*, 246.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, 249-250.



## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### Hypothesis

The hypothesis of this ministry project proposed that participation by members of Malaby's Crossroads Missionary Baptist Church in Bible study, seminars and other educational sessions will increase knowledge and change attitudes and beliefs about conflict resolution and healing. This hypothesis was based on serving as pastor over the last seven years of the congregation, and the awareness of the history of ongoing unresolved conflicts within the congregation. The researcher's awareness led him in the belief that some type of instruction would be necessary and meaningful to the congregation in resolving conflict. Factors that contributed to unresolved conflicts were the lack of Biblical teaching in understanding what God had to say concerning conflict resolution. The insufficiency of scripture is the result in misunderstanding or misinterpretation of true biblical teaching. Without the biblical insight and knowledge of the Bible, the community of faith would not have the essential tools needed to resolve conflict. The objective of this case study was to help the congregation develop a healthier way to resolve conflict without hurting relationships with others. In *Creating a Healthier Church*, Ronald W. Richardson helps the readers to understand how congregations

function emotionally and how to behave in the midst of unsettling and conflicting circumstances.<sup>1</sup> This ministry project included a small portion of the congregation at Malaby's Crossroads Missionary Baptist Church. In order to secure a sample an announcement was made at the 11:00 A.M. service to recruit volunteers. Two sermons that were preached were designed to introduce a strategy for conflict resolution, forgiveness, and healing within and between parishioners. Following these sermons a survey was distributed to parishioners who expressed an interest in participating in the pilot. The pilot included the following questions to help develop the pre-test, post-test questionnaire:

1. Do you believe that there is relevance in a healing ministry in church?
2. Is there a need for a church to go through a process of healing?
3. Is there a need for you to come to church to be healed?
4. Would you say that you have a conflict with someone now in the church?
5. Is there a need for you to have forgiveness before you come to church?
6. Do you think that you can serve in a ministry without forgiving someone?
7. Would you know of someone right now that you have not forgiven in church?
8. What is your understanding of a congregation healing ministry?
9. What is your understanding of forgiveness?
10. What is your understanding of resolving church conflict with another person in church?

---

<sup>1</sup> Richardson, *Healthier Church*, 31.

### Intervention

In March 18, 2012 fifty surveys were distributed to interested parishioners in the congregation. The eighteen parishioners who completed and returned their surveys were chosen as the project sample. Fourteen of the eighteen participants actually continued through the entire process. There were five males ranging between the ages of fifty-seven to seventy-four. There were nine females ranging between the ages of thirty-five to seventy-three. The group included two associate ministers, three deacons, one trustee, and eight lay members that participated in the ministry project.

### Research Design

The purpose of the ministry project was to study the process of conflict resolution, using biblical strategies that promote forgiveness and healing. The design chosen for this project is a case study with pre-test and post-test questionnaires. This design was chosen because it allowed the researcher to develop a process to observe parishioners as data were collected. A case study is an intensive analysis of an individual unit, person, group or event. It stresses developmental factors in relation to context. The method helps pastors learn from a situation. The questions included in this instrument were developed based on the responses to the pilot survey. The success of the model is reliant on the learned practice of the participants and whether the knowledge gained led to a transformation of their previous understanding of conflict resolutions. Their transformation is vital to the purpose of developing and utilizing tools that will bring about healing within and with others while providing a model in managing future conflicts.

This qualitative system approach to conflict resolution is to acquire trained facilitators that will have a biblical base knowledge to interpret what scripture speaks on the subject. This will allow the participants and the researcher to gain more insight on conflict resolutions. This kind of knowledge from the trained facilitators will better equip the participants and the researcher to help promote healing among the congregation. The concept of this research design as stated earlier involves members from the congregation males and females interacting with one another which will allow an opportunity for introspection.

### Measurement

Data were collected by pre-test and post-test questionnaires. As stated earlier, these questionnaires documented the attitudes beliefs and knowledge of participants concerning conflict, forgiveness and healing. The pre-test included two questionnaires the first was a five point Likert scale with eight statements. Responses range from strongly agree to strongly disagree. (See Table 1) The second questionnaire had eight statements requiring yes or no answers. The Likert scale was chosen because it is the most widely used approach to scaling responses in survey research. The scale captures the intensity of parishioner's attitudes and beliefs.

### Instrumentation

The pre-test and post test Likert scale questionnaires contained fixed format statements requiring responses ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The second questionnaires solicited yes or no responses about the parishioner's beliefs and attitudes about conflict, forgiveness and healing. Observation and interview techniques were used during and after each session. By stating the hypothesis describing the

intervention, displaying the research design which is a systematic strategy (input, process, outcome) whose results will be measured by observation and pre-test, post-test questionnaires it is now time to discuss the field experience in detail.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>22</sup> Daniel Katz and Robert L. Kahn, *The Social Psychology of Organizations*, (New York, NY: John Wiley and Sons, Inc, 1978), 51-68.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **FIELD EXPERIENCE**

The hypothesis of this ministry project proposed that participation by members of Malaby's Crossroads Missionary Baptist Church in Bible study, seminars and other educational sessions will increase in knowledge and change in attitudes and beliefs about conflict resolution and healing. The case study involved volunteers from the congregation. Conflicts arose over the years that were unresolved awaiting the next pastor to take over and attempt to solve them. The presence of unresolved conflicts at Malaby's led to the conclusion that this intervention was needed to protect the welfare of the faith community. Many challenges were experienced during this study. The greatest challenge involved helping the congregation to understand being transparent was relevant for this case study. Members of the congregation were never transparent in their testimonies or in their emotional approach to unresolved conflicts.

As outlined in the book *Creating a Healthier Church*, Richardson says "there will always be times of imbalance in the church's emotional system, times when there are conflicts and problems in the church that challenge the leadership."<sup>1</sup> Some leaders decided not to join the study and attempted to influence other members from participating

---

<sup>1</sup> Richardson, *Healthier Church*, 30.

because of the transparencies involved. However despite these challenges the study moved forward.

The educational process (See Figure 1) of this study included biblical writings, role playing, prayer journey and questionnaires. The training included four group sessions at Malaby's Crossroads Baptist Church. The groups consisted of the fourteen members at Malaby's who regularly attend worship.

The following information was obtained:

- Eleven were married and three single
- Four males, age 51-60; and one male, age 61-75
- Two females, age 35-50; three females, age 51-60; and four females, age 61-75
- Six were employed and eight were retired
- Eleven had attended college
- Two completed post graduate
- Two were associate ministers, three were deacons, one was a trustee

They willingly chose to participate following an appeal from the pulpit. Many expressed their awareness of past conflicts and were interested in exploring possible ways to manage future conflicts. The researcher served as the facilitator for one session and observed during other sessions. Two guest facilitators conducted the second and third sessions. All sessions were held in the month of April 2012 on Saturday mornings at 10:00 A.M. (See Figure 2). The case study consisted of four 2-3 hour sessions. A pre-test was administered at the first session. Participants shared their concerns regarding unresolved conflicts and whether or not information shared would be made public. The

researcher assured them of the confidentiality of the project. All participants signed a confidentiality form. (See Appendix-A)

Figure 1 Conflict Resolutions/Healing Process

<u>Input</u>	<u>Process</u>	<u>Outcome</u>
Trained Facilitators	Education	
Have knowledge of conflict resolution	Bible Study Sermons	Resolved conflicts
Healing resources	Seminars	Forgiveness
Skilled in problem solving strategies	Role play	Healing

Figure 2 Field Experience Schedule

Date	Topic	Facilitator
April 7, 2012	Introduction, Prayer; pre-test administered  Conflict Resolution  The Power of Forgiveness  Prayer Journey Service  Post-test administered	Rev. James Utley
April 14, 2012		Dr. Johannes Christian
April 21, 2012		Dr. Carol Love
April 28, 2012		Rev. James Utley
		Min. Tim Hunter  Min. Larry Wilder



## Data Collection

After all confidentiality forms were signed pre-test questionnaires were distributed. Participants were instructed to be truthful. Instructions for the Likert scale were to place an [x] in the box that best expressed their beliefs, attitudes or feelings. Whether they strongly agree, tend to agree, neither agree nor disagree, tend to disagree, or strongly disagree with the statements. Participants were instructed to check [yes or no] in the box that best expresses their beliefs, attitudes and feelings towards each statement. After the pre-test was administered the first seminar (Conflict Resolution) was administered on April 14, 2012 by Dr. Johannes Christian (See Figure 2).

The session focused on conflict resolution discussing biblical stories of conflicts and steps that can be taken for bringing about healing between parishioners. The participants were discussing this session via Skype with Dr. Christian an outline of the session is listed below:

### 1. Overview

This training on conflict resolution is designed to have a deeper understanding of resolving conflict among church leaders and members of the congregation. The focus is to further assist the members with different strategies for conflict resolution

### 2. Objective

To open up a dialogue with the group to find out why, congregational members sometimes, refuse to share their stories with other parishioners. The purpose of this session is to have a better understanding of how to resolve personal conflict in their lives as well in the life of someone else. Dr. Christian encouraged each member to share with one another about their life experiences of unresolved conflict.

## Task

While under the direction of Dr. Christian, the group discussed how to be better Christians in resolving conflict. They were told it is the attack of Satan that brings division and want the Christians to remain divisive. In his book *“The Face of Forgiveness,”* Dr. Christian knew that there was conflict with him in his own life as well as in the young man Jacob McNary’s life. Dr. Christian knew that there was a conflict within his own family when they knew of the possibility that he would forgive the young man, in hopes of saving Jacob’s life. Through prayer and forgiveness healing came when Dr. Christian was fully able to forgive Jacob and drafted letters to him expressing his desire to Jacob, “That I forgive you.” This would set him free as well as setting Jacob free.<sup>2</sup>

## Achieve the goals

- As Christians find time to pray (1Thessaloians 5:17)
- Have inner peace (Romans 5:1) and listen to the Spirit of God
- Walk by faith and not by sight (2 Corinthians 5:7)
- Be truthful to yourself and to God (Jeremiah 4:2)
- Glorify God through your conflict (1 Corinthians 10:31)
- Always take the high road and go to your brother or sister in prayer
- Taking the right step can lead to a right relationship
- Find the time to read and study scriptures (Psalm 119:105)

Dr. Christian challenged each member that after these seminars they would be a better Christian if they are true to God as they go through this project.

---

<sup>2</sup> Christian, *Face of Forgiveness*, 112.

During the second session the participants took part in a seminar (The Power of Forgiving) with Dr. Carol Love, Ph.D., a community psychologist.

Goal: To explain and demonstrate the process that leads to forgiving then healing through conflict resolution. (Conflict Resolution + Forgiving => Healing)

Activities:

- I. Define forgiving
- II. Review the Lord's Prayer
- III. Role play, roles assigned to participants as they arrived for the session  
The Parable of the Unforgiving Servant (Matthew 18:21-35) (See Appendix E)
- IV. Participants Shared Personal Stories
- V. Examining Scriptures on Forgiving:
  - Jacobs steals Esau's blessing (Gen. 27 1-28)
  - Jacob's and Esau makes peace (Gen.32:3-6; 33:1, 4:11)
  - Joseph and his brothers (Gen. 50:14-21)
  - Jesus teaching on prayer (Luke 11: 1-4)

The researcher conducted the third session with a healing service, (Prayer Journey) with two ministers assisting. The purpose of this sessions was to focus on praying for others and humility. The group discussed the value of intercessory prayer, meditating on God's word and what does humility mean to you as Jesus demonstrated when He washed His disciples' feet. Teamwork was also discussed. One statement

made by Jim Putman in his book titled *Church Is a Team Sport*, he says “God wants His team to work together for His glory, and that teamwork is essential to winning and the church is really a team sport.”<sup>3</sup>

There was an opportunity for each participant to focus on prayer and unity in the church, to take a self examination of personal conflicts that they had or still have. Many had indicated in the prior session on forgiveness that the only way they could let go of conflict was through withdrawal or avoidance. The group began a discussion on foot washing and why Jesus washed the disciples’ feet. Many had the wrong perspective of foot washing, a few only thought about the idea of foot washing was only done in some other higher form of church.

#### Prayer Journey

James K. Wagner in his book “Healing Services,” asked the question that many people have asked “why have healing services.” Is not every service on Sunday morning and Wednesday night a healing service?<sup>4</sup> Just as emphasis is placed on evangelism, music, stewardship, education, missions, and social concerns we need to have specific times to center on a progressive healing ministry. One of the commands of Jesus to His disciples was to go out and heal, not just for then, but for the church today.

#### 1. OPENING PRAYER

As we come to worship you and praise you to worship and praise your holy name, O God, remind us of all your blessings underserved and benefits that never quit. This moment is a special time for each of us for healing and restoring.

---

<sup>3</sup> Putman, *Team Sport*, 177.

<sup>4</sup> Wagner, *Healing*, 2.

## 2. THE WASHING OF FEET

Jesus said, you call Me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you. Most assuredly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him (John 13:13-16 NKJV).<sup>5</sup>

The statement that Jesus makes gives the understanding of what He meant, which can be applied both to the earthly relationship to one's master and to our relationship with Christ. Also we can truly see through the pages in the gospel how Jesus approached His relationship with God the Father. Jesus was always submissive to the Father, and God is the greatest servant in the universe, that we depend on Him for everything including our very lives.

## 3. MEDITATION OF SCRIPTURE

This was a time for reflections for each participant sat quietly from the foot washing they had their first table of reflecting on God's word reading scripture from what the bible had to say about conflict resolution, forgiveness, and healing. Some of the scripture's were as follows:

### Conflict Resolution

Strive for peace with everyone, and for holiness without which no one will see the Lord. See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springs up and causes trouble, and by it many become defiled. (Hebrews 12:14-15)

If your brother sins against you go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone, If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. Mathew 18:15

---

<sup>5</sup> MacArthur, *Study Bible*, 1612.

## Forgiveness

Bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint another, forgiving each other, as the Lord has forgiving you, so you also must forgive. (Colossians 3:13)

Bless the Lord O my soul, and forget not all His benefits who forgives all your iniquities, who heals all your diseases. (Psalm 103:2)

For I will restore health to you and heal you of your wounds says the Lord. (Jeremiah 30:17)

To another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the same Spirit. (1 Corinthians 12:9)

I will heal their backsliding; I will love them freely, For My anger turned away from him. (Hosea 14:4)

## 4. ASSURANCE OF PARDON

In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven!

In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven!

## 5. A WORD OF HEALING AND PRAYER

Wagner in his book *Healing Services* says that we as human beings cannot just depend on medical profession to keep us one hundred percent healthy. Medicine helps, surgery procedures helps, psychology helps, but those therapies alone are insufficient for our total care, we are spiritual beings created in the image of God. As human beings having a spiritual experience; rather, we are spiritual beings having a human experience.<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> Wagner, *Healing*, 3.

As each member of the project finished mediating on the word of God there was a time for each member to have a one on one prayer session with guest facilitators. No one was made to go into the prayer room. Each individual had the opportunity to leave after finishing with private meditation. However, all volunteers chose to participate in intercessory prayer with guest ministers.

## 6. THE BENEDICTION

There was a time of sharing their thoughts about blessings from God and thanks for the opportunity to be involved in the project. After this period of sharing the pos-test was administered. It consisted of the same two questionnaires used in the pre-test. The session ended with prayer.

### Analysis of the data

Data analysis involved comparison of individual and group scores as well as percentages on the pre-test and post-tests. Average scores for the group on each question were also compared. Several individuals had large increases in their total scores. For example, participant #2 total score went from thirty one to thirty nine. Participant #3 total score went from thirty five to forty. Examination of the total score or each question revealed that there was a shift in knowledge and attitude on pre-test Part I. For example, question four had an average group score of five. This means that all participants strongly agreed with the statement (resolving conflict can lead to a better way of life). However, the average score of five on the post test part I shifted to question one which means that all the participants strongly agreed with the statement (I can forgive by praying). (See Tables one and three). The results can be viewed on Table one, Table two, Table three, and Table four on the following pages.

TABLE 1  
Attitudes and Knowledge Regarding Conflict, Forgiveness and Healing

Place an X in the box that best expresses your beliefs, attitude or feelings.

Respondent #	I can forgive by praying	One step in the forgiveness process is to humble yourself.	Another step in the forgiveness process is to talk with an elder of the church.	Resolving conflict can lead to a better way of life.	I feel better after I have resolved a conflict with someone.	I feel comfortable with my Biblical knowledge of healing.	I believe that healing is the final step in the conflict resolution process.	The scriptures give examples of how to resolve conflict.	Total	
1	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	40	100%
2	5	4	2	5	4	3	4	4	31	78%
3	4	5	3	5	5	4	4	5	35	88%
4	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	39	98%
5	5	5	4	5	5	4	5	4	37	93%
6	5	5	2	5	5	4	4	5	35	88%
7	5	5	5	5	5	4	4	4	37	93%
8	5	5	3	5	5	5	5	5	38	95%
9	4	5	3	5	4	4	5	5	35	88%
10	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	39	98%
11	5	5	1	5	5	4	5	4	34	85%
12	5	5	3	5	5	5	4	4	36	90%
13	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	40	100%
14	5	4	4	5	4	5	4	4	35	88%
Total/sum	67	68	50	70	67	62	64	63	511	
Responses	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	
Average	4.79	4.86	3.57	5.00	4.79	4.43	4.57	4.50	36.50	
	96%	97%	71%	100%	96%	89%	91%	90%	91%	



TABLE 2

## Beliefs and Feelings Regarding Conflict Resolutions, Forgiveness and Healing

Check Yes or No in the box that best expresses your beliefs, attitude or feelings.

Respondent #	I believe that forgiveness is a process to healing.	I believe that Conflict Resolution is a process to forgiveness.	I talk to God in prayer before I forgive others.	Is it wrong to forgive someone if I have not healed completely.	I believe that I can be healed inwardly after I have forgiven someone.	There are many unresolved conflicts in my life.	I believe that it is important to resolve personal conflicts that I may have in my life.	I believe these bible study workshops/training sessions will help me resolve conflict, to forgive others and be healed.
1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
2	1	1	1	2	1	2	1	1
3	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1
4	1	1	1	2	1	2	1	1
5	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1
6	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1
7	1	1	1	2	1	2	1	1
8	1	1	2	2	1	2	1	1
9	1	1	1	2	1	2	1	1
10	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
11	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1
12	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1
13	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
14	1	1	1	2	1	2	1	1
	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No
Total/sum	14	0	14	13	1	3	11	14
Responses	14	0	14	13	1	3	11	14
Average	1.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	1.00
	100%	0%	100%	93%	7%	21%	79%	100%

TABLE 3  
Attitudes and Knowledge Regarding Conflict, Forgiveness and Healing

Place an X in the box that best expresses your beliefs, attitude or feelings.

Respondent #	I can forgive by praying	One step in the forgiveness process is to humble yourself.	Another step in the forgiveness process is to talk with an elder of the church.	Resolving conflict can lead to a better way of life.	I feel better after I have resolved a conflict with someone.	I feel comfortable with my Biblical knowledge of healing.	I believe that healing is the final step in the conflict resolution process.	The scriptures give examples of how to resolve conflict.	Total	
1	5	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	39	98%
2	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	39	98%
3	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	40	100%
4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	40	100%
5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	37	93%
6	5	5	5	5	5	3	5	5	37	93%
7	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	39	98%
8	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	38	95%
9	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	40	100%
10	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	40	100%
11	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	38	95%
12	5	5	5	5	5	4	4	4	36	90%
13	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	39	98%
14	5	4	5	5	4	5	5	5	38	95%
Total/sum	70	69	62	69	69	64	68	69	540	
Responses	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	
Average	5.00	4.93	4.43	4.93	4.93	4.57	4.86	4.93	38.57	
	100%	99%	89%	99%	99%	91%	97%	99%	96%	

# Beliefs and Feelings Regarding Conflict Resolutions, Forgiveness and Healing

Check Yes or No in the box that best expresses your beliefs, attitude or feelings.

Respondent #	I believe that forgiveness is a process to healing.	I believe that Conflict Resolution is a process to forgiveness.	I talk to God in prayer before I forgive others.	Is it wrong to forgive someone if I have not healed completely.	I believe that I can be healed inwardly after I have forgiven someone.	There are many unresolved conflicts in my life.	I believe that it is important to resolve personal conflicts that I may have in my life.	I believe these bible study workshops/training sessions will help me resolve conflict, to forgive others and be healed.
1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1
2	1	1	1	2	1	2	1	1
3	1	1	1	2	1	2	1	1
4	1	1	1	2	1	2	1	1
5	1	1	1	2	1	2	1	1
6	1	1	1	2	1	2	1	1
7	1	1	1	2	1	2	1	1
8	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	1
9	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	1
10	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
11	1	1	1	2	1	2	1	1
12	1	1	1	2	1	2	1	1
13	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
14	1	1	1	2	1	2	1	1
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Total/sum	14	0	12	2	14	0	14	0
Responses	14	0	12	2	14	0	14	0
Average	1.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00
	100%	0%	86%	14%	100%	0%	100%	0%

Results in pre-test on Part I show the ranges of total scores are from thirty one to forty. Likert scale scores were used to calculate the results. (Strongly agree=5, Tend to agree=4, neither agree nor disagree=3, tend to agree=2, strongly disagree=1.) The average scores on questions range from 3.57 to 5.00. The percentages range from 71 to 100. The results on the post-test table 3 show the range of total scores are from 36 to 40. The average scores 4.43 to 5.00. Moving from total scores to specific scores focus was place on differences between the pre-test and post-tests where participants strongly agreed with statements on the Likert scale. The results are as follows:

1. I can forgive by praying to God.  
Pre-test 96% Post-test 100% change +4
2. One step in the forgiveness process is to humble yourself.  
Pre-test 97% Post-test 99% change +2
3. Another step in the forgiveness process is to talk with an elder of the church.  
Pre-test 71% Post-test 89% change +18
4. Resolving conflict can lead to a better way of life.  
Pre-test 100% Post-test 99% change -1
5. I feel better after I have resolved a conflict with someone.  
Pre-test 96% Post-test 99% change +3
6. I feel comfortable with my Biblical knowledge of healing.  
Pre-test 89% Post-test 91% change +2
7. I believe that healing is the final step in the conflict resolution process.  
Pre-test 91% Post-test 97% change +6

8. The scriptures give examples of how to resolve conflict.

Pre-test 90% Post-test 99% change +9

Responses on Part II pre-test and post-test reveal the largest changes in question #2 and #6. There was no change in question #1, 4, 7, 8. The results comparing participants who responded yes on the pre and post-test are as follows:

1. I believe that forgiveness is a process to healing.

Pre-test 100% Post-test 100% no change 0

2. I believe that Conflict Resolution is a process to forgiveness.

Pre-test 100% Post-test 86% change -14

3. I talk to God in prayer before I forgive others.

Pre-test 93% Post-test 100% change +7

4. Is it wrong to forgive someone if I have not healed completely?

Pre-test 21% Post-test 21% change 0

5. I believe that I can be healed inwardly after I have forgiven someone.

Pre-test 100% Post-test 100% no change 0

6. There are many unresolved conflicts in my life.

Pre-test 57% Post-test 14% change -43

7. I believe that it is important to resolve personal conflicts that I may have in my life.

Pre-test 100% Post-test 100% no change 0

8. I believe these bible study workshops/training sessions will help me resolve conflict, to forgive others and be healed.

Pre-test 100% Post-test 100% no change 0

## Outcome

Responses on the post test indicated to what extent participants gained knowledge or changed their attitudes and beliefs about conflict resolution, forgiveness and healing. The outcome of this case study was positive. Changes and responses to statements from pre-test to post-test shown on tables 2 and 4 are significant. On the pre-test 57% (eight participants) believed “There are many unresolved conflicts in my life.” The post-test shows only 14% (two participants) still believed “There are many unresolved conflicts in my life.” This represents a forty-three point change which implies conflicts were resolved as a result of participating in the systematic approach to problem solving. Responses to three statements shown on pre-test post-test table 1 and 3 have significant changes on statements 3,7,8 with increases of 18,6,and 9 points respectively. Participants accept forgiveness as a step in the process by talking to an elder in the church. They believe healing is the final step in the conflict resolution process (See Statement 7). Finally, the participants learned that the scriptures give examples of how to resolve conflict (See Statement 8).

There were only two statements where one or two participants changed their responses between pre-test and post-test statements that produced negative scores. These statements were; “I believe that conflict resolution is a process to forgiveness.” Two respondents changed from yes to no (group scores changed from 100% to 86%). “Resolving conflict can lead to a better way of life.” One change from strongly agree to agree group scores (100% to 99%). If this is as bad as it get then it is all good.

Consequently, the methodology will be repeated at MCMBC using the fourteen participants as ambassadors, and/or facilitators after additional training. Other

parishioners will be encouraged to participate in sessions. It will be recommended that auxiliaries or programs participant as a group. For example, a session could be presented to a Sunday school class, the deacons and trustees, a missionary group or the dance team. Having completed the analysis of data and outcome it is possible to begin reflection in the next chapter.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **REFLECTION, SUMMARY, AND CONCLUSION**

#### **Reflection**

From the beginning this case study has been an opportunity for spiritual and personal growth. It brought back childhood memories and changed the writer's perspective on family conflicts. It opened up an opportunity to understand other methods to conflict resolution, forgiveness and healing. For example during each session the facilitators and parishioners shared stories that involved experiences from early childhood to present day. It was enlightening as the pastor to see parishioners secure in sharing with others deep and personal feelings. Observation of the interaction of participants and their body language revealed changes. Stress in faces relaxed. Conversations flowed more freely. Personal stories were given in more detail. The sacrifices of time and commitment to sharing were impressive. The writer was encouraged by parishioner's comments after each session. For example: Hearing issues of others made their conflicts more bearable. Reviewing scriptures on forgiveness and role playing helped participants let issues go. Participants learned that they could only change their behavior and not the behavior of others. Going through the foot washing session taught participants the true meaning of servitude and humility.



The success of this field experience makes it possible to engage other organizations in the church with this process. Replication of this case study will make the corporate body stronger. Beginning January 2013 the process will be introduced to church officers. Based on the outcome of this group auxiliaries will be solicited. It is the belief of the researcher that the participants will use their knowledge and experience to promote change in the attitudes of the congregation.

### Summary

The purpose of this case study was to develop a strategy for conflict resolution at Malaby's Crossroads Missionary Baptist Church and provide training to promote healing. Several conflicts needed resolving for example, (1) outside organizations (Eastern Star, Masons) influenced decisions in the church; (2) resistance to allowing female ministers in the pulpit; (3) power struggles among church officers; (4) personal issues of parishioners. The reason this intervention is important is because this process of conflict resolution and healing of individual parishioners can lead to conflict resolution and healing of the corporate body. The fourteen parishioners volunteered and completed the field experience. The group included five men and nine women ranging in age from thirty-five years to seventy-five. The process had several stages. It began with an introduction and pre-test. This was followed by three sessions ranging from two to three hours. Sessions involved bible studies, conflict resolution, forgiveness, role playing and a healing service. After the healing service the post-test was administered.

Results of this field experience show that all parishioners had an increase in knowledge and a change in attitudes and beliefs about conflict resolution, forgiveness and healing. Two examples of responses to statements verify this claim "there are many

unresolved conflicts in my life” (pre-test eight (8) yes; post-test two (2) yes). “The scriptures give examples of how to resolve conflict,” (pre-test 90 %; post-test 99% strongly agree.

### Conclusion

This systematic qualitative approach allowed the goal to be reached. The case study helped parishioners learn strategies to resolve personal conflicts; to forgive themselves and others as well as receive healing. A recommendation for future research is to use the same strategies with officers, auxiliaries, and other groups in the church to achieve corporate healing in the body of Christ.

**APPENDIX A**  
**CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT**

## CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

The confidentiality and security of others are of great concern for all persons that have been involved in this project. Each person that has been part of this project and data has the responsibility of the highest level of trust. You are entrusted in preserving the security and confidentiality of this information.

It is in the best interest of every person that agrees to be a part of this research project or through personal observation must read and comply with the confidentiality and security policies of the research project, church, and seminary.

1. I understand that the information being shared should be disclosed by those authorizing it.
2. I will respect the confidentiality of others in this project.
3. I will not repeat or write down what has been said or relay information to others.
4. I understand that if I violate the terms of this agreement that I will not be able to continue in this project.

---

Name

Date

Witness

## **APPENDIX B**

### **AGREEMENT TO PARTICIPATE MEMO**

## AGREEMENT TO PARTICIPATE MEMO

April 7, 2012

Greetings In the Name of Jesus:

My dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ, as you are aware that I am in the Doctor of Ministry program at United Theological Seminary. This part of the project is part of the study for the degree. I encourage you to participate in Conflict Resolution and Parishioner Healing in the Church. My hypothesis is that there will be an increase in spiritual healing, renewal, and increasing members to be better disciples for Christ as issues are resolved. The project will start 1 April-28 April 2012. The persons that are selected to participate in the project will be randomly selected and a total of sixteen. There will be four weeks of learning about conflict resolution and congregational healing. The requirements are a committed spirit and meet for all four weeks. At each meeting any questions and concerns that may arise will be discussed. Agreement to participate in this project will of course need your signature. Please call should you have any questions or concerns regarding this project. (919) 848-9046. Blessings and Thanks in advance for your prayers, support, and participation.

### AGREEMENT TO PARTICIPATE

I DO AGREE TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS PROJECT

I DO NOT AGREE TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS PROJECT

Signature\_\_\_\_\_

Date\_\_\_\_\_

**APPENDIX C**  
**BIBLE SESSION**  
**CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP**

## **BIBLE STUDY**

### **CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP**

#### **WHAT DOES IT MEANS TO YOU**

**LEARNING GOAL:** The goal of this study is to gain a better understanding of being a good disciple and be accountable in your stewardship. Our stewardship will make us better Christians to become better believers in Jesus Christ. What we do with our time, talents, substance God is concerned about it.

#### 1. Time, talents and treasure all to be used to the Glory of God

What does Christian Stewardship mean to you? Many people when they think of stewardship, they think of money, time, and talents. Yes Christian Stewardship is about those things, but it is more than those. Christian Stewardship involves our whole life, everything that God has entrusted us to manage as faithful stewards.

We are part of God's family when we made the choice to follow Him. Look at the love of God toward us in 1 John 3: 1-2, God calls us to be His own, these verses just let us know that it is not about me, that stewardship is not a solo performance. Christian Stewardship is done within the Christian community to honor God and to benefit others.

Christian Stewardship should be a free and joyous activity I am reminded when I thought about what I wanted to do, and what I thought was important to me then giving can become a burden. Because you are no longer thinking in terms of what God has entrusted you with, but now it is all about me. It's what I want and what I want to do. Let us look at these three areas of

#### 2. Our Time:

I remember when coming up when there was church every Sunday afternoon, BTU services, and Sunday afternoon worship services. Are we spending our time more wisely now that we have moved God right out of our lives?



In Ephesians 5: 15-16; NKJ; 15; See then that you walk circumspectly not as fools but as wise, 16; redeeming the time, because the days are evil. This term just means walking “accurately or precisely with great care.” To live morally is to live wisely. However the “fool” because of their unbelief they live apart from God and against God’s law. Proverbs 1:7, 22 (The fear of the Lord), this reverential awe and admiring, submissive fear is foundational for all spiritual knowledge and wisdom. While many in the church and unbelievers will make statements about life and truth, but still do not have true and ultimate knowledge until they are in a redemptive relationship with God.

It amazes me how many people have all the answers, and they never come to bible study nor do they attend discipleship classes on Sunday morning, but have all the answers and claim that they know God. God can’t work in a house when it is all full. When we understand that it is not all about us, we start by getting some, teaching about God, and learning about God, fearing God, knowing about God, and imitating God wisdom. The fear of the Lord is a state of mind in which one’s own attitudes will, feelings, deeds, and goals are exchanged for God’s.

Our time is precious, it is not about me I know that we want it to be about us but it is not. As believer’s we are to make the most on this evil earth in fulfilling God’s purposes, lining up every opportunity for useful worship and service (1<sup>st</sup> Peter 1:17 Colossians 4:5). Walk in wisdom toward those who are outside, redeeming the time. Those outside refers to those who are unbelievers. Believers are called to so live that they establish the credibility of the Christian faith and that they make the most of every evangelistic opportunity. Make the most does not mean jamming the Word of God down folk’s throats. But give them what they need in the time that they need it. If we would

listen and talk to God He will reveal to you when to say it, and what to say at that right moment. Let us not have too many missed opportunities.

### 3. Our Talents:

"In managing all of life and life's resources;" Part of our stewardship struggle is that we think we own everything.

"Own" all those things that surround us our business, our home, car, our children when, in truth, we are just managers. A manager is just a boss, a supervisor, director, who has been entrusted to carry things out until the CEO (chief executive officer) returns. Scripture tells us that "The earth *is* the LORD'S, and the fullness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein."

Romans 12: 3-8; The measure of faith the correct proportion of the spiritual gifts or supernatural endowment and ability the Holy Spirit gives each believer, so they may fulfill their role in the Body of Christ. Faith is not a saving faith but rather faithful stewardship, the kind and quantity required to use one's own particular gifts. Every believer receives the exact gift and resources he/she needs to fulfill his/her role in the Body of Christ.

No matter what the gifts, ministry, or effects, all spiritual gifts are from the Holy Spirit. It goes back to one of our headings in everything you do, do it to the Glory of God. They make Him known, understood, and evident in the church and in the world, by spiritually profiting all who receive their ministry.

Eph. 4:11-16: What God gave us is for us to help those that are around us, and not to keep it to ourselves. To be in fulltime Christian ministry is an honor reserved for those whom God specifically calls to it. No one takes this honor to themselves. Heb. 5:4

Until we are called into Christian ministry fulltime we must know that it is still a blessing to be a help to those around us. Why do you think that God has blessed us with the talents that we have, and put us in the areas that we work in? It was God not the devil who gave us all the skills that we have to be that blessing to someone else. Computer skills', coaching on football, or basketball field, etc; not only that to excel at the work place that you are in is a Godly virtue.

The choices we have to make while using our talents are;

To walk with Jesus thru everything that we go through

To walk with Him and listen to Him

To walk with Him and enjoy the gifts and skills that He gave you

#### 4. Our Treasure:

What do we do with our treasure because after all it belongs to us right? After we have worked all of our lives and to say give it away, or to be more concerned about earthly treasures, than eternal treasures. How many know that as fast as money comes in it also goes out. 1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 6:6-8; 18-19; Here Paul talks to Timothy and tells him that “godliness with contentment is great gain” and that, instead of possessions, we should be pursuing righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, and gentleness. Now to the carnal mind that is a hard pill to swallow. Because most of us are taught to go after these things of this world, get all that you can get. Paul learned to be content in whatever state he was in. Philippines 4: 11;

Our first priority should be in seeking Jesus, and then spreading the word. The inevitable result of doing this will be wonderful blessings and eternal life (Matt. 6:33

verses 18-19). Paul list 4 nonnegotiable activities which Christian leaders must require those with wealth, with using the strong language of command from verse 17. To be rich in good works, to be generous and liberal, or open-handed, this perhaps especially includes generous provisions for the needs of widows, and ministers as indicated in 1 Timothy 5. Caring for the poor is the most common aspect of giving in the New Testament and was one of the spiritual disciplines taught by Jesus (Matt. 6: 1-18; Luke 16: 19-31).

We are tempted to gauge people by their financial worth. But from a heavenly perspective that understands that “which is truly life, and the nature of true riches,” our worth is measured by our good deeds. A lot of people these days are concerned with “How much am I worth?” It is a terrible question or least a terrible way to phrase it if we are inquiring about our possessions. Paul makes it clear in these verses that the real question is not, “How much money do I have?” but,” “How much are my good works are worth.”

God will call us all on the carpet and see just where we stand in our works for the Body of Christ. Are we visiting the sick praying for them; are we visiting those in prison; are we clothing the homeless? It is noteworthy to mention that Paul does not think we earn or buy our way into heaven. Rather our generosity is measured as a true response to the free gift of salvation as in Luke 12: 32-33. The Kingdom as gift leads to selling possessions and giving to the needy and thereby providing for oneself a treasure in heaven. Nor does the teaching about wealth and generosity in 1<sup>st</sup> Timothy: 5-6 come from humans; it is entrusted by God as with all other truth. In the New Testament in Acts the Apostle served those by giving of their time talents and resources Acts 4:31 “Now the

multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul; neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed was his own, but they all had all this in common.<sup>1</sup> The all belonged to God, but the method was to give the money to the Apostle and they would distribute it.

---

<sup>1</sup> MacArthur, *Study Bible*, 1642.

## **APPENDIX D**

### **BIBLE STUDY SESSION**

## **BIBLE STUDY**

### **THE JESUS WAY OF FORGIVING**

**LEARNING GOAL:** The goal of this study is to gain a better understanding of forgiving as to what Jesus taught in the Bible, that we might have a right relationship with God and other human beings.

The lesson that we learn today in the bible will show men and women what the Bible has to say about forgiving one another that will too be forgiven.

#### **I. USE SCRIPTURE IN FORGIVING ONE ANOTHER**

- Go to the Bible when you are in conflict with someone.
- Remember to pray before you talk about the issue.
- Try to memorize those scriptures that will help you.
- Talk your situation over with God before confront another.
- If God can forgive then we can forgive.

#### **II. BIBLICAL EXAMPLES OF FORGIVENESS**

- Proverbs 17:9 Psalm 103:2 Psalm 32:1
- Colossians 3:13 Acts 13:38 Romans 12:20
- James 4:1 Philippians 1:27 Hebrews 12:14-15

Many of us are having trouble or difficulties in the area of forgiveness. We must realize that we need the Lord's strength to learn how to forgive one another and even ourselves.

- Some of us need to forgive ourselves.
- Some of us need to forgive our parents.
- Some of us need to forgive our children.

- Some of us need to forgive our heavenly Father.
- Some of us need to forgive the ones who died before we were reconciled.

It is always good to try and memorize scripture with what you are dealing with a good example is: “Do not say, “I will pay you back for this wrong!” “Wait for the Lord, and He will deliver you.”



## **APPENDIX E**

### **THE PARABLE OF THE UNFORGIVING SERVANT**

#### **ROLE PLAY**

## The Parable of the Unforgiving Servant

Matthew 18:21-35

Narrator: Jesus teaches His followers through stories referred to in the bible as parables.

Parables are earthly stories with heavenly or divine meanings. Sometimes when Jesus was asked a question, He answered by telling a parable. One day Peter came and asked:

Peter: Lord, how many times shall I forgive someone who sins against me? Seven times?

Jesus: No! Seventy times seven. For this reason the Kingdom of heaven can be compared to a king who decided to bring his accounts up to date with his servants who had borrowed money from him. So he sent for them to come one by one.

Servant I: Your majesty I was told you wanted to see me.

King: Yes, I am bringing my accounts up to date. You must pay the ten thousand talents that you owe me.

Servant I: Sir, I cannot pay it now.

King: Then you must sell your wife, your children and all that you own to pay me.

Servant I: (Fall down and beg with crying sounds) Oh, please, please, please Sir, be patient with me and I will pay you.

King: Alright I will have pity on you!!!Your debt is forgiven. You do not owe me anything.

Narrator: This servant was relieved but was neither grateful nor remorseful. Just watch what he does to a fellow servant after leaving the king.

Servant I: Hey, you come here. (Grabs fellow servant by the throat and began to choke him) pay me the few hundred denarius that you owe me.

Fellow Servant: (fall to his knees) Oh, please, please, please, be patient with me and I will pay you back.

Servant I: I will have you thrown in jail until you pay all your debt.

Narrator: When the other servants saw what happened, they were greatly distressed and went to tell the king everything that had happened. The king immediately sent for the servant whom he had forgiven.

King: You wicked man. I cancelled all of your debt because you begged me to. Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you? Go, you will be tortured until all your debt is paid.

Jesus: This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you if you refuse to forgive your brothers and sisters in your heart.

Narrator: God is very forgiving but He also judges those who refuse to forgive!

**APPENDIX F**  
**QUESTIONNAIRES ONE AND TWO**

## QUESTIONNAIRE 1

(Pre and Post- Test)

This questionnaire is designed to test your understanding and knowledge of conflict resolution, forgiveness, and healing. At the end of the study you will take the same test again to see if there is any changes in your understand of the same subjects.

5-Strongly Agree	4-Tend to agree	3-Neither agree nor disagree	2-Tend to disagree	1-Strongly disagree
------------------	-----------------	------------------------------	--------------------	---------------------

Place an X in the box that best expresses your beliefs, attitude or feelings

1. I can forgive by praying to God.

1	2	3	4	5	
(0)	(0)	(0)	(3)	(11)	Pre-test
(0)	(0)	(0)	(0)	(14)	Post-test

2. One step in the forgiveness process is to humble yourself.

1	2	3	4	5	
(0)	(0)	(0)	(2)	(12)	Pre-test
(0)	(0)	(0)	(1)	(13)	Post-test

3. Another step in the forgiveness process is to talk with an elder of the church.

1	2	3	4	5	
(1)	(2)	(4)	(2)	(5)	Pre-test
(0)	(0)	(2)	(4)	(8)	Post-test

4. Resolving conflict can lead to a better way of life.

1	2	3	4	5	
(0)	(0)	(0)	(0)	(14)	Pre-test
(0)	(0)	(0)	(1)	(13)	Post-test

5. I feel better after I have resolved a conflict with someone.

1	2	3	4	5	
(0)	(0)	(0)	(3)	(11)	Pre-test
(0)	(0)	(0)	(1)	(13)	Post-test

6. I feel comfortable with my Biblical knowledge of healing.

1	2	3	4	5	
(0)	(0)	(1)	(6)	(7)	Pre-test
(0)	(0)	(0)	(4)	(10)	Post-test

7. I believe that healing is the final step in the conflict resolution process.

1	2	3	4	5	
(0)	(0)	(0)	(6)	(8)	Pre-test
(0)	(0)	(0)	(2)	(12)	Post-test

8. The scriptures give examples of how to resolve conflict.

1	2	3	4	5	
(0)	(0)	(0)	(7)	(7)	Pre-test
(0)	(0)	(0)	(1)	(13)	Post-test

## QUESTIONNAIRE 2

(Pre and Post-Test)

This questionnaire is designed to test your understanding and knowledge of conflict resolution, forgiveness, and healing. At the end of the study you will take the same test again to see if there are any changes in your understanding of the same subjects.

Check Yes or No in the box that best expresses your beliefs, attitude or feelings

1. I believe that forgiveness is a process to healing.

Yes	No	Yes	No
(14)	(0)	(14)	(0)

2. I believe that Conflict Resolution is a process to forgiveness.

Yes	No	Yes	No
(14)	(0)	(12)	(2)

3. I talk to God in prayer before I forgive others.

Yes	No	Yes	No
(13)	(1)	(14)	(0)

4. Is it wrong to forgive someone if I have not healed completely?

Yes	No	Yes	No
(3)	(11)	(3)	(3)

5. I believe that I can be healed inwardly after I have forgiven someone.

Yes	No	Yes	No
(14)	(0)	(14)	(0)

6. There are many unresolved conflicts in my life.

Yes	No	Yes	No
(8)	(6)	(2)	(12)

7. I believe that it is important to resolve personal conflicts that I may have in my life.

Yes	No	Yes	No
(14)	(0)	(14)	(0)

8. I believe these bible study workshops/training sessions will help me resolve conflict, to forgive others and be healed.

Yes	No	Yes	No
(14)	(0)	(14)	(0)



**APPENDIX G**  
**BIBLE SESSION**

## BIBLE SESSION ONE

### THE HEALING OF NAMAAN

**LEARNING GOAL:** The goal is to gain a better understanding that God is constantly at work to lead his people to himself, and that the grace of God cannot be brought with silver and gold or power and position.

Fredrick J. Gaiser in his book, *Healing in the Bible* states “God accomplishes healing in all kinds of venues and in all kinds of ways. God heals through the work of creation, through the presence of Christ, through the power of the Holy Spirit, and through prayers and support of the people of God.”<sup>1</sup> When Jesus sent the disciples out two by two they were commanded by Jesus to heal those who were in need of healing. This lesson gives the reader some understanding that you don’t have to pay for your healing if you truly believe in Christ it is free if we just be obedient unto his words.

#### 1. Naaman Goes to Elisha (vs. 9)

This must have been an impressive picture. Naaman in his chariot with his fine horses, with his gold and silver and fine clothes standing in front of the prophet’s house which was probably very impressive by Naaman’s standards. Naaman was a proud man. He was proud of his accomplishments, talents, power, position, and wealth. He rode up arrogantly and thought, surely this lowly prophet of Israel will come out to me, Naaman the great warrior; and he will wave his hand over the area of my leprosy and I will be cured. We see his pride expressing itself in verses 9, 11 and 12, but especially in his anger at being told to go and wash seven times in the Jordan.

---

<sup>1</sup> Gaiser, *Healing Bible*, 3.

Even the power, the victories he had enjoyed, and his accomplishments were given him by the God almighty. What does the Scripture teach about the pride of man?

- Proverbs 6:17.
- Proverbs 11:2.
- Proverbs 18:18.
- Proverbs 29:23

God cannot and will not bless us as long as we are full of pride. Obadiah 3:4.

## 2. The Actions and Commands of Elisha (vs. 10)

That which the prophet does in this passage may seem rude; in fact, he would be severely criticized by many church members today and our politically correct society. His actions would be viewed as unloving, rude, and arrogant. But what Elisha did was really an act of love. It was a means of showing Naaman his pride so he could receive God's grace and begin to count for God himself. Sure Naaman reacted in a rage and went off. But note that Elisha didn't run after him; it appears he simply turned it over to the sovereignty of God who then worked through the life of another to bring Naaman to his senses. As long as Naaman was proud, he would never obey the Lord in humble belief or faith.

## 3. The Reactions of Naaman (vss. 11-12)

First, let's note what Naaman said as he went away in his fury in verse 11, "Behold I thought." What verse of Scripture comes to your mind here? "There is a way that seemeth right unto man, but the ways thereof are the ways of death." Irving Jensen says of this: This leprous, dying man had actually the presumption to devise in his own mind exactly the plan by which he wanted his cure to be affected."

Naaman had contempt for God's solution and plan. To him it was base and foolish. He was thinking why should I go wash in the muddy Jordan River in Israel when I have clear streams of water in Damascus? Of all the absurd ideas! Note the human reasoning here. The implication is: If a cure comes through bathing in a stream, then I have better streams in which to bathe myself.

Paul makes a comment about man's wisdom and solutions versus God's wisdom and the plan of salvation in the cross of Christ. The world's standards and ideas of salvation seem so much more logical in comparison to God's which seems foolish and so simplistic. "Go wash in the Jordan seven times and you shall be clean." A very simple thing to do, surely, but Naaman objected. And so the Bible teaches, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved. But simple faith is not so simple; men object. Ironically, desires, he wants things his own way; he wants to be saved his way; he wants to be spiritual his own way; he wants the church to operate his way, and on the list goes. But man must submit humbly to the wise plans of God or there can be no salvation, no real joy and fruitfulness, no deliverance.

Jensen says:

Verse 12 shows that in Naaman's heart a struggle was going on between faith on the one hand and unbelief on the other. It was the crucial moment for Naaman, and Satan was trying hard to get the victory, as he does with every person on the point of making the great decision. Satan first appealed to Naaman's reason: "See how unreasonable this

remedy is! If bathing is the cure for leprosy, there are far better streams than this Jordan in which to wash.” He argued, “Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel?”<sup>2</sup>

Satan also played on Naaman’s pride, and pointed to the way in which he had been treated. Naaman, a great personage, had come to make a request of a king and pay handsomely for services rendered. First he was sent to the lowly dwelling of a prophet, who did not even come out to meet him, and then he was sent off in this way, without any display or notice, to wash in the muddy Jordan River! So he turned away in a rage, and it seemed as though Satan had won.

#### 4. The Persuasion of Servants of Naaman (5:13)

Then his servants came near and spoke to him and said, “My father, had the prophet told you to do some great thing, would you not have done it? How much more then, when he says to you, ‘Wash, and be clean’?” Naaman “was willing to pay any price, willing to do any great deed of prowess, to make any fatiguing pilgrimage, but he was unwilling to obey a simple command ‘wash and be clean.’

What was the issue here: the washing, no? Would that cure him? No. It was the obedience of faith. It was personal faith in the command of the prophet and not the evidence of his faith, washing, which cured him. It was his simple faith in the word of God, the root. Washing was simply the fruit, the result.

Today, men are saved simply and solely by the obedience of faith, by believing in the Lord Jesus Christ as one’s personal Savior. Nevertheless, this may also illustrate the importance of wise and timely persuasion needed in personal evangelism. Notice the

---

<sup>2</sup> Gaiser, *Healing Bible*, 65.

following points about the wisdom of their answer, an answer of the tongue as a timely word with sweetness of speech, yet honest and courageous evaluation.

(1) They were courteous. They called Naaman “my father,” showing respect and submission. They chose their words carefully that they might persuade Naaman and help him.

(2) They spoke from what they knew about Naaman. He was proud and courageous; they knew he was willing to do a great deed.

However, it was precisely this, Naaman’s pride and his personal opinion which was keeping Naaman from being healed. So, the four concerned servants tactfully sought a way to show Naaman that it was not his greatness, by which he would be healed, but by the greatness of the God of Israel. They were able to see from their more humble state and perspective that this was designed to demonstrate the power of the God of Israel. Should he not, then, heed the simple instruction of the prophet.

Finally, this simple command beautifully illustrates the simplicity of the gospel message of salvation in Jesus that salvation is by faith alone in Christ alone. The invitation of the gospel is “come, purchase without money and without price.” And how do you do that? By faith, the way of faith is the way of humiliation and repudiation of self worth, human ability, or religious works, which then casts us on the grace of God. Faith, is the one thing we can do without doing anything. Faith is the recognition of God’s ability and the repudiation of ours. Of course, there are those who read this passage and use it to promote baptismal regeneration, but the analogy of Scripture and the abundance of clear passages teach us that water baptism, as important as it is, does not save us.

### 5. Naaman cleaned up (5:14)

Naaman went down and dipped himself seven times in the Jordan, according to the word of the man of God; and his flesh was restored like the flesh of a little child, and he was clean. The immediate cleansing illustrates the complete and instantaneous nature of salvation. We note that he was cleansed “according to the Word.” Salvation is always and only according to the Word, and never according to our feelings or emotions or human reason. He was cleansed instantly and completely so that his flesh became like that of a little child, but not only his flesh, but his heart also. He became a new creature by faith in the Lord of Elisha the prophet.

### 6. The Gratitude and Response of Naaman (5:15-16)

When he returned to the man of God with all his company, and came and stood before him, he said, “Behold now, I know that there is no God in all the earth, but in Israel; so please take a present from your servant now.” 16 But he said, “As the LORD lives, before whom I stand, I will take nothing.” And he urged him to take *it*, but he refused.

These verses provide us with an illustration of the first fruits of salvation. First, he confessed and acknowledged his faith in the Lord. From a grateful heart he wanted to give a present to Elisha to express his appreciation for what God had done.

However, Elisha, carefully and wisely refuses. Why? Elisha had accepted help from the Shunammite woman and her husband, and Scripture teaches it is right for those who are taught the Word to share all good things with him who teaches.

So why did he refuse to accept a gift from Naaman? Because there were other implicating issues that would be compromised by receiving a gift at this time. He wanted Naaman

and all those watching to know he was a servant of Yahweh and not like the greedy heathen priests in the service of Baal. He also wanted them to understand that salvation and all of God's blessings are free, they cannot be bought nor can they be earned. Elisha refused to take anything lest he compromise the name of God and His grace

#### 7. Naaman's Concern Regarding His Master's Worship (5:17-19)

17 Naaman said, "If not, please let your servant at least be given two mules' load of earth; for your servant will no more offer burnt offering nor will he sacrifice to other gods, but to the LORD. 18 In this matter may the LORD pardon your servant: when my master goes into the house of Rimmon to worship there, and he leans on my hand and I bow myself in the house of Rimmon, when I bow myself in the house of Rimmon, the LORD pardon your servant in this matter." 19 And he said to him, "Go in peace." So he departed from him some distance.

This certainly illustrates the kind of concern God's people should have regarding their worship, their testimony and the appearance of evil. Naaman knew that he would have to return to his old environment and live in the midst of idolatry and evil. How many times when we give ourselves of the Lord that at times we tend to fall back into our old environment and live in the midst of evil. The lesson is Naaman knew that after being healed he could no longer live the life he formally lived. He was concerned that he might have a proper means of worship for he could no longer worship in the house of Rimmon. He would not compromise Yahweh. He needed a place and a means for worship, so he asked for permission (note the sudden change in attitude) to take two loads of soil back home. The exact reason is not specified, only implied. Some believe it was so he could erect an altar to Yahweh for a memorial or witness to the God of Israel in



his own land. On this he could offer sacrifices as an evidence of his determination to forsake all other gods.

Another suggestion is, “Naaman asked Elisha whether two mule loads of Israelite soil might be taken with him back to Syria so that whenever circumstances forced him to bow ceremonially to the Aramean gods with his king, he might in reality be placing his knees in the soil of the true God of Israel.” Regardless, Naaman was concerned about what God would think about his presence in the house of Rimmon.

Elisha’s only response was, “Go in peace.” This implies Elisha’s assurance that God understands. The issue was his attitude and heart. Perhaps this illustrates the principle of separation versus isolation. Believers are to infiltrate or penetrate the world for the Lord. As the Lord put it, we are to be in the world, but not of it.

Naaman knew he would have to go back into the world and face the evil of that day. It was his responsibility, but he knew he needed fortification through the true worship of the true God if he was to be an effective witness. All appeared to be lost, it appeared Satan had won and that Naaman would go away without healing and without the saving knowledge of the Lord.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Albertz, Rainer. *A History of Israel's Religion in the Old Testament Period*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1994.
- Ammerman, Nancy and Carl Dudley. *Studying Congregations: A New Handbook*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1998.
- Ammerman, Nancy Tatom. *Studying Congregations: A New Handbook*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1998.
- Babbie, Earl R. *The Practice of Social Research*. 6th ed. Belmont, Calif: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1992.
- Backus, William D. *The Healing Power of a Christian Mind: How Biblical Truth Can Keep you Healthy*. Minneapolis, Minn: Bethany House Publishers, 1996.
- Bergan, Jacqueline Syrup and Marie Schwan. *Forgiveness: A Guide for Prayer*. Rev. and updated ed. Chicago: Loyola Press, 2011.
- Black, C. Clifton ed. *The New Interpreter's Bible*, vol. 9. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995.
- Boils (Skin Abscesses) Information, Causes*  
<http://www.medicinenet.com/boils/article.htm>. Assessed (Nov. 11, 2012).
- Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. *Letters and Papers from Prison*. New York: Macmillan, 1972;  
Daniel Migliore, *Faith Seeking Understanding*, Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2004.
- Brenner, David. *Strategic Pastoral Counseling*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book Housing Company, 2003.
- Bridges, Jerry. *Growing Your Faith: How to Mature in Christ*. Colorado Springs, Colo. NavPress, 2004.
- Brookfield, Stephen. *Developing Critical Thinkers: Challenging Adults to Explore Alternative Ways of Thinking and Acting*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1987.
- Christian, Johannes. *The Face of Forgiveness*. Columbus, GA: Brentwood Christian Press, 2005.

- Conger, Jay Alden. *Spirit at Work: Discovering the Spirituality in Leadership*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1994.
- Converse, Jean M. and Stanley Presser. *Survey Questions: Handcrafting the Standardized Questionnaire*. Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1986.
- Cook, Stephen L. *The Apocalyptic Literature*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2003.
- Covey, Stephen R. *Principle-Centered Leadership*. New York: Summit Books, 1991.
- Crandall, Ronald K., *Turn Around and Beyond: A Hopeful Future for the Small Membership Church*. Expanded ed. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2008. Cranton, Patricia. *Professional Development as Transformative Learning: New Perspectives for Teachers of Adults*. San Francisco California: Jossey-Bass, 1996.
- Creswell, John W. *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approach*. 3rd ed. Los Angeles: Sage, 2009.
- Culbertson, Philip Leroy. *Caring for God's People: Counseling and Christian Wholeness*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2000.
- Daloz, Laurent A. *Effective Teaching and Mentoring: Realizing the Transformational Power of Adult Learning Experiences*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1986.
- Davies, Richard E. *Handbook for Doctor of Ministry Projects: An Approach to Structured Observation of Ministry*. Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1984.
- Dossey, Larry. *Healing Words: The Power of Prayer and the Practice of Medicine*. San Francisco, CA. Harper, San Francisco, 1993.
- Enns, Paul, ed. *The Moody Handbook of Theology*. Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1989.
- FayObserver, *Estimated 1000 Expected to Benefit From Free Dental Care*; available from <http://www.fayobserver.com/articles/2012/04/27/1172615>; Internet April 27, 2012.
- Felder, Cain Hope Ed; and Renita Weems IN *Stony the Road We Trod; African American Biblical Interpretation*; "Reading Her Way Through the Struggle: African American Woman and the Bible," Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991.
- Fetterman, David M. *Using Qualitative Methods in Institutional Research*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1991.

- Fischer, David. *Historians' Fallacies: Toward A Logic of Historical Thought*. 3rd ed. New York: Harper Perennial, 1970.
- Foot, David, and Helen Foot. *The Healing Word*. Worthing, West Sussex, England: Henry Walter, 1979.
- Fowler, James W. *Stages of Faith: The Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning*, 1 ed. New York, NY: Harper Collins Press, 1978.
- Fowler, Floyd J. *Survey Research Methods*. 2nd ed. Newbury Park: Sage Publications, 1993.
- Freire, Paulo and Antonio Faundez. *Learning to Question: A Pedagogy of Liberation*. New York: Continuum, 1989.
- Freire, Paulo. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. 30th Anniversary ed. New York: Continuum, 2000.
- Gaiser, Frederick J. *Healing in the Bible: Theological Insight for Christian Ministry*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2010.
- Galbraith, Michael W. *Facilitating Adult Learning: A Transactional Process*. Malabar, Fla.: Krieger Publishing. Co., 1991.
- Gemignani, Michael C. *Making Your Church A House of Healing*. Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 2008.
- Gerstenberger, Erhard. *Yahweh the Patriarch: Ancient Images of God and Feminist Theology*, trans. by Fredrick Gaiser. Minneapolis, MI: Fortress, 1996.
- Greenwood, Davydd J. *Introduction to Action Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications Inc, 1998.
- Groome, Thomas H. *Christian Religious Education: Sharing Our Story and Vision*. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1980.
- Hacker, Diana, Nancy I. Sommers, Thomas Robert Jehn, Jane Rosenzweig, and Marcy Horn. *A Writer's Reference*. 6th ed. Boston: Bedford/St. Martins, 2007.
- Inbody, Tyron. *The Faith of the Christian Church: An Introduction to Theology*. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Erdmans Publishing, 1989.
- Johnson, Kevin, and Ken Sande. *Resolving Everyday Conflict*. Grand Rapids: Baker Publishing Group, 2011.

- Jones, Doug. *Understanding the Healing Power of God*. Tulsa, OK: Doug Jones Ministries, 1997.
- Jones, Laurie Beth. *The Path: Creating Your Mission Statement for Work and for Life*. 1st ed. New York: Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication, 1996.
- Kornfeld, Margaret Zipse. *Cultivating Wholeness: A Guide to Care and Counseling in Faith Communities*. New York: Continuum, 1998.
- Krueger, Richard A., and Mary Anne Casey. *Focus Groups: A Practical Guide for Applied Research*. 3rd ed. Thousand Oaks, Calif. Sage Publications, 2000.
- Landau, Sy & Barbara Landau & Daryl Landau, *From Conflict to Creativity: How Resolving Workplace Disagreements Can Inspire Innovation and Productivity* New York: Jossey-Bass, 2001.
- Linn, Matthew, Sheila Fabricant Linn, and Dennis Linn. *Understanding Difficult Scriptures in a Healing Way*. New York: Paulist Press, 2001.
- MacArthur, John, *The MacArthur Study Bible*, Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson 1997, 1838.
- Mack, Sir Walter. *How to Make a Wrong Relationship Right, Discover the Keys to Overcoming Relationship Challenges*. Tulsa, OK: Word and Spirit Books, 2010.
- Mack, Sir Walter Lee. *Passion for Your Kingdom Purpose: Sharpen your Gifts, Test your Character, and Move to Your Next Level*. Tulsa, Okla. Harrison House, 2004.
- Mann, Thomas. *The Oxford Guide to Library Research*. 3rd ed. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2005.
- Mansfield, Stephen. *Healing Your Church Hurt: What to do When You Still Love God but Have Been Wounded by His People*, Austin, TX: Tyndale House Publishers, 2010.
- Marshall, Catherine and Gretchen B. Rossman. *Designing Qualitative Research*. Newbury Park, Calif.: Sage Publications, 1989.
- McConnell, William T. *Renew your Congregation: Healing the Sick, Raising the Dead*. St. Louis, Mo.: Chalice Press, 2007.
- McNiff, Jean, Pamela Lomax, and Jack Whitehead. *You and Your Action Research Project*. Taylor & Francis e-Library ed. London: Routledge, 2002.

- McTaggart, Robin. *Participatory Action Research International Contexts and Consequences*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997.
- Meeks, Wayne A. *The First Urban Christians: the Social World of the Apostle Paul*. 2nd ed. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003.
- Mezirow, Jack. *Transformative Dimensions of Adult Learning*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1991.
- Migliore, Daniel L. *Faith Seeking Understanding*. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2004.
- Moltmann, Jurgen, *The Source of Life The Holy Spirit and the Theology of Life*, Minneapolis; MN: Augsburg Fortress, 1997.
- Mull, Richard. *Lord, Heal Me*. Lake Mary, Fla: Creation House, 2008.
- Myers, William. *Research in Ministry*. Chicago, IL: Exploration Press, 1993.
- . *Research in Ministry: A Primer for the Doctor of Ministry Program*. Chicago Ill: Exploration Press, 2002.
- Nouwen, Henri J. M. *The Wounded Healer In Our Own Woundedness, We Can Become a Source of Life for Others* New York NY: Crown Publishing, 1972.
- Osborn, T. L. and T. L. Osborn. *Biblical Healing*. 1 ed. Tulsa, OK: Osborn Publishers, 2001.
- Oñe, Kenzaburo. *A Healing Family*. Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1996.
- Patton, Michael Quinn. *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods*. 3 ed. Thousand Oaks, Calif: Sage Publications, 2002.
- Perdue, Leo G., Robert Morgan, Benjamin D. Sommer. *Biblical Theology: Introducing the Conversation*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2009.
- Pohly, Kenneth H. *Transforming the Rough Places: The Ministry of Supervision*. Dayton, OH: Whiteprints, 1993.
- Poirier, Alfred J. *Peacemaking Pastor, The Biblical Guide to Resolving Church Conflict*. Grand Rapids: Baker Publishing Group, 2006.
- Porterfield, Amanda. *Healing in the History of Christianity*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.

- Proctor, Samuel DeWitt. *The Substance of Things Hoped for: A Memoir of African-American Faith*. Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1999.
- Putman, Jim. *Church is A Team Sport: A Championship Strategy for Doing Ministry Together*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2008.
- Ramey, David A. *Empowering Leaders*. Kansas City, MO: Sheed & Ward, 1991.
- Rea, Louis M. and Richard A. Parker. *Designing and Conducting Survey Research: A Comprehensive Guide*. 2nd ed. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1997.
- Richardson, Ronald W. *Creating a Healthier Church: Family Systems Theory, Leadership, and Congregational Life*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996.
- Rodriguez, Dawn. *Research Paper and the World Wide Web, The Writer's Guide*. 1<sup>st</sup> ed. Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1997.
- Salant, Priscilla and Don A. Dillman. *How to Conduct Your Own Survey*. New York: Wiley, 1994.
- Scofield, Rev. C.I. D.D., *The Scofield Study Bible*. King James, The Holy Bible, 1352.
- Steinke, Peter L. *Congregational Leadership in Anxious Times: Being Calm and Courageous no Matter What*. Herndon, Va.: Alban Institute, 2006.
- Sudman, Seymour, and Normen M. Bradburn. *Asking Questions a Practical: Guide to Questionnaire Design*. 1. ed. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1989.
- The Anatomy of Peace: *Resolving the Heart of Conflict*. San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2006.
- Theissen, Gerd and Annette Merz. *The Historical Jesus: A Comprehensive Guide*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998.
- Thomas, Owen C, and Ellen K. Wondre. *Introduction to Theology*. 3rd ed. Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse Publishing, 2002.
- Thurman, Howard. *With Head & Heart: The Autobiography of Howard Thurman*. 2nd ed. Orlando, FL: Harcourt Brace & Co; 1979.
- Tiffany, Frederick C. and Sharon H. Ringe. *Biblical Interpretation: A Roadmap*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996.
- Tuckman, Bruce W. *Conducting Educational Research*. 2nd ed. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1978.

- Turabian, Kate L. *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations: Chicago style for Students and Researchers*. 7th ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007.
- Vyhmeister, Nancy. *Quality Research Papers for Students of Religion and Theology*. 2001. Reprint, Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2001.
- Wagner, James K. *Healing Services: Just In Time*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2007.
- Wainwright, Elaine Mary. *Women Healing/Healing Women: The Genderization of Healing in Early Christianity*. London: Equinox Pub., 2006.
- Weems, Renita J. *Just a Sister Away: Understanding the Timeless Connection Between Women of Today and Women of The Bible* Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 2004.
- Williams, Terrie M. *Black Pain: It Just looks Like We're Not Hurting: Real Talk for When There's Nowhere To Go But Up*. New York: Scribner, 2008.
- Wolcott, Harry F. *Writing up Qualitative Research*. Newbury Park, CA. Sage Publications, 1990.